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Malru



THE
GLADIATOR OF RAVENNA.

A DRAMA, IN FIVE ACTS.

BY
FRIEDRICH HALM.

Men can render their will great or small! When imprisoned within a contracted circle, the mind grows narrow and compressed; it expands and soars high when animated by a lofty object.—SCHILLER.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN, WITH A PREFACE,

BY
PROFESSOR DE VERICOUR.

Matone. J. 93.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

ONE of the pre-eminent characteristics of modern Germany is, the enthusiastic sympathy with which are hailed all the energetic advocates of progressive movement, and of social as well as political reforms. The whole realm of Germanic literature is impregnated with the political aspirations that animate the Teutonic nations, along with their hopes for loftier institutions. That hopeful spirit breathes even more vividly in the domain of poetry than in the grave and abundant pages of history. There are, no doubt, many poets still, beyond the Rhine, who remain within the loftier regions of poetry—whose muse is not inspired by liberty and the glories of the Forum—who, like Uhland, Justinus Kerner, the late Gustav Schwab and their followers—poets of the Swabian school, prove themselves faithfully to be the exquisite posterity of the Minnesingers. Other poets, like Geibel, or, like Schücking—the Westphalian so bent upon singing the charms of his native land—and a few others, whatever may be their political digressions, remain within the limits of political principles of an extreme moderation. On the whole, the great majority of the poets of modern Germany are inspired by the political views, the various hopes of reforms, that have never ceased to agitate Europe in our time. Poetry, with them, is more especially an instrument, a means to that end; and, whatever may be their genius, poetry, in the artistic point of view, is with them an object of secondary consideration. The old and venerable Arndt has, during forty years, sent forth his patriotic stanzas, burning with intense hatred for his Gallic neighbours, which, however legitimate before 1815, is now stripped of its interest and devoid of its object. Count Platen's muse has always been nobly inspired by the iniquitous sufferings of prostrate Poland. Count Auersperg, Stieglitz, the Pfizers, Dingelstedt, have all been faithful to the cause

of liberty, or adopted it, later, as a more dignified subject for their genius. Heim and Hoffmann have been obliged to leave their country in consequence of their bold allusions. Herwegh's poetical compositions are replete with every idea of socialism compatible with rhythmical effusions. Froelich, in his epic, Ulrich von Hutten, has skilfully introduced political allusions and expressions of his hopes, with a power and energy which, it is needless to add, gave great umbrage in high political quarters.

But the drama also, has been in Germany a field from which have been sent forth numberless popular yearnings. Gutzkow and Prutz have thrown into their dramas all the spirit of opposition and reform that was admissible in such compositions. Gutzkow has ever transformed the stage into an arena for theological disputes. His Uriel Acosta, performed at Dresden, in the midst of the ardent plaudits of the multitude, is a sort of dramatic discussion on the conflict of ecclesiastical statutes, and on religious liberty. We are not aware that the liberty of conscience has been menaced in Saxony; but if there had been a shadow of danger on the subject, it seems that the legislative assemblies, the bishops and consistories of Germany, would avert it without delay; claims of that nature do not appear dignified or graceful on the stage. A great number of the fantastic dramas of Gutzkow, however, are free from the excesses of political and religious allusions, and his genius may well have forcibly depicted in some of them the maddening persecutions of despotism, as he has himself cruelly suffered from them. Prutz goes farther; his object is to found a political drama as a regular mode of political opposition; in this novel forum he has occasionally transgressed the laws of moderation and good taste, despite the superiority of his intellect, and his skilful taste in other fields of literature. Of late, however, Germanic genius has evinced the salutary symptoms of a greater reserve. It has manifested the rational conviction that the cause of the people and of freedom, will be served far more effectually in avoiding struggles with the state police, and in only producing before the public plays and dramas which, however political and moral in their object, will remain within the limits of pure, admissible truth, engendering no convulsive passion — no frantic explosions — but a simple, dignified enthusiasm, which is Nature itself. In this respect, the dramatic authors of Germany possess, in Schiller's immortal Wilhelm Tell, the most perfect of all models.

The Germans attribute to the drama, and the stage generally, an importance not to be met with elsewhere. The theatre, with them, is not only an amusement indispensable to their taste and manners, but is also a serious school, a public tribune. They encourage, love, and esteem the dramatists. Among dramatic authors are to be found at this day, as well as in the days of Goethe and Schiller, many of the greatest names in the literature and society of Germany; and among them, those who are hailed with the greatest enthusiasm, are ever the authors whose genius has been kindled by some idea of liberty or humanity. As Germany contains several capital cities under governments that differ in the degree of toleration, there are dramatic compositions that are permitted in one metropolis, and sometimes repulsed in another, or the representation of which is the result of endless efforts or private influences. Some twenty-five years ago, Michael Beer—whose premature death has been an irreparable loss to the drama, brother of the illustrious composer of the *Prophet*—succeeded in having his *Struensee* performed at Munich, Dresden, and Berlin. Laube, on the contrary, who suffered nine months in the state prison of Berlin, beheld insuperable obstacles opposed to the appearance of his *Struensee* on the stage. In the varied dramatic movement of Germany, Vienna and Berlin, whose tastes differ extremely, form the two extreme points; Dresden and Munich, on the other hand, present a point of transition between the two points—a sort of dramatic eclecticism. In Munich, however, political subjects also occupy the stage, although with less freedom and boldness than in the North of Germany. At Munich, a drama, the heroine of which is a *woman of the people* (by Mallian), has excited a greater enthusiasm than any of the compositions of Goethe or Schiller. There also, a patriotic drama by Knorr, the hero of which is *Plinganser*, a student who, at the commencement of the 18th century, put himself at the head of the people against the Austrians, has had a marvellous success. It may be observed, however, that such a popularity, as well as that of the *Quistons* of Schneider, at Berlin, is more especially the result of the national vanity skilfully flattered, and not so much an enthusiasm created by the illustration of a general, universal principle, as in the other dramas mentioned above.

Of late years no drama in the whole of Germany has obtained such a popularity as the *Gladiator of Ravenna*. Its author, Mr. Munch de Bellinghausen (nephew of the

former president of the Germanic Diet), a lyric and dramatic poet of great eminence, has signed all his works with the pseudonym of Friedrich Halm. He sent his "Gladiator" to the director of the imperial theatre at Vienna, anonymously, without giving his pseudonym, already very celebrated in Germany. The drama was performed on the 18th of October, 1854, before empty benches, as there was no author's name assigned to it that might prove an attraction for the public; but after the first representation, its success was complete. The public flocked subsequently to hear it. It was soon represented in all the principal cities of Germany, Berlin, Dresden, Hamburg, Munich, Leipsic, &c., and in all it was hailed with the same enthusiastic admiration. The singular incognito of the author became a source of intense curiosity and conjecture throughout Germany. We have heard the authorship attributed to a prince of royal blood, well known for his distinguished literary labours. In the very midst of this triumph of the Gladiator, a Bavarian schoolmaster, who had written a play on the same subject, and sent it to Mr. Laube, director of the Vienna imperial theatre, wrote to Mr. Laube, complaining of his being the victim of a plagiarism. Friedrich Halm had in the meantime made himself known as the author of the drama that occupied so deeply the public mind. The schoolmaster gave publicity to his claims, and soon found partisans and sympathizers; but the great test had not yet been appealed to; he was called upon to publish his own "Gladiator," and as soon as it appeared, the public opinion unhesitatingly, unanimously, proclaimed the pre-eminent superiority and originality of Halm's drama, as to execution, object, and spirit; and its triumph was enhanced by the pretensions of its humbler rival. It is the custom in Germany not to send a dramatic composition to the press till it has passed through all the principal theatres of its agglomerated states, and exhausted, as it were, every source of succession the stage. This explains why the Gladiator of Ravenna, although performed in 1854, was only published the year before last. The original is in beautiful poetry, literally translated here in plain prose.

Hermann, or Armin, or Arminius, who vanquished Varus and his Roman legions, and his wife Thusnelda, are the two most antique and revered personifications of Germanic nationality. Friedrich Halm, in selecting them for the background, as it were, of his drama—in bringing them, as a source of contrast with corrupt and despotic Rome—in adopting them as a powerful, sublime agency in the

dramatic action—was naturally evoking remembrances and associations that could not fail to rouse the slumbering enthusiasm of the Germans for their traditions. It is therefore very probable, that the simple, pure, patriotic feelings of the descendants of Armin, contributed somewhat to the extraordinary success of the Gladiator of Ravenna; but that they did so to a very limited degree, and with a certain class only, we feel convinced, after careful researches and observations on the subject. It is the deeper object of the drama—the far more profound illustration it presents—that drew forth the unbounded admiration and sympathy of pensive Germany.

We believe that no truthful and enlightened member of a civilized community will deny that personal, political, and mental freedom are the elementary rights of our being. When freedom has been hunted through the world,—when it is exposed to insult and injury,—when it is crushed by conquest,—mind remains her last refuge,—her last asylum; but when it quails there, and, still more, when its very essence is poisoned there in the cradle, what does become of the worth of human nature? If air and water stagnate, instead of becoming elements of life and enjoyment, they become sources of disease, pestilence, and death; but, what are these types compared with the miseries—with the monstrosity—which result from a stagnation of Thought! It is true that no human power can control the secret working of the mind; still further, philosophers proclaim that no human power *can* chain down the internal movements of thought; but it is no less an irrefragable truth that criminal human power can check, blunt, annihilate the mind of its fellow-creature in its very germ; and transform it so, that it grows in a perpetual state of putrefaction; incapable of any intellectual or moral feeling; lost to every sentiment of its mental being. The creature, created in the image of God, then continues to live, but feeble, inert, undesirous of assistance, it ceases to be a man; it becomes a chattel. The laws of Divine Providence appear outraged beyond the general human conception; for, those whose faith in divine mercy is restricted within certain limits, may be understood to doubt whether Almighty God will consent to admit *chattels* into the realm of eternity.

Friedrich Halm's *GLADIATOR* is an admirable illustration of such a transformation of human mind. He is born with every noble germ that the Creator of all has awarded to man; but the human mind of the slave-gladiator has grown

in the most abject state—in a putrid atmosphere. He has lived in utter ignorance of his own divine right—he has lost all that is human : intelligence, virtue, the purer affections ; but still more—skilful corruption, and the system of terror that has made slaves of men among all races—have degraded him also, so far as to make him bless his servitude, adore his oppressors, pride himself in his disgrace, play cheerfully with his chains—nay, his grovelling spirit clings to them—he would even seek them. And the tender interest he inspires by those noble germs in him, irrevocably perverted and transformed, does not debar us from feeling that there is no hope of redemption for him—that he must die unredeemed in this world, to meet with his recompense and regeneration in the other, where the assassins of his soul will in their turn meet with divine justice.

We behold in the Gladiator of Ravenna the excesses and completeness of the mental thralldom which annihilates the whole spiritual being, and engenders a monstrous transformation. It does not behove us to enter into an analysis of the partial intellectual rights that are still fettered or impeded in our modern societies ; the whole of Europe is alive to them. We have great faith in the ultimate perfected state of the human mind. It seems a consoling and general belief in our time that the prospects of progress for individuals and the world at large, in our European societies, must be in accordance as the intellect can be cultivated in all classes, assert its own dignity, claim its rightful province of investigation, and pursue its career of development, both moral and spiritual.

But the *gladiator* exhibits also, in his individuality, the results of that odious, wholesale system of slavery, accepted as an institution by a great Christian country. A powerful party in that country has skilfully organised a system which will prove the destructive agency of its greatness, even of its very existence, if pursued ; namely, a system, the object of which is to make a portion of our fellow-creatures descend from the state of man to that of insensible brutish beings, lowered to the condition of cattle—studying the best mode of augmenting the abjectness of the slave, in order to ensure for ever his slavery—annihilating him, brutalising him, as much as possible, so that the slaveholder may *conscientiously* authorize himself, by such a state, to his rivetting the chains still more cruelly, and be justified in doing so in the face of the world. Slavery, that evil of all evils, that iniquity of all iniquities, renders such a system

necessary to its duration; for whenever the African has been entrapped into the condition of a slave, he requires long constraint and unnaturally harsh usage, before he can be tamed to submission to his unnatural state; and it is but too often, after tortures which surpass only the refined cruelty of those of the old Inquisition, that he can be harnessed to his work. It is only, therefore, by such a transformation, or rather annihilation of the mind, as stated above, that permanent submissive tools can be obtained; and the great destructive worm, invisibly gnawing—preparing decay and ruin—dwells in the evident fact, that not only the tools themselves, but the tool users are caught in the corrupting net. The master himself is degraded in degrading his fellow-creatures. Powerful Rome had grown rotten by such a system, and fell. If slaveholders will continue to reduce a portion of their fellow-creatures to the state of the Gladiator of Ravenna, there is a fair prospect of beholding a society of diminutive Caligulas and of Glabrios.

The corrupt and selfish instincts of egotism, extended by the growing spirit of commercial and industrial speculation, are the bulwark of slavery; those instincts are ever active in propagating its principles, in defending them with a fierceness and a coarseness very much resembling what France beheld in her masters during the Reign of Terror. But this is not all; a greater evil—a greater profanation—is slowly working its way. Mrs. H. Beecher Stowe, who has evinced what we must be permitted to denominate the Genius of the Heart, points out with deep emotion, but with a calm, powerful reasoning, that Christianity itself is menaced with a total corruption in its very essence, in the lands cursed with slavery. And in truth, how can the religion which proclaims that God must be worshipped in spirit and truth, be taught in its purity, to degraded beings in whom all spirit is crushed? How can the human soul radiate towards heaven, if it is shorn of all its attributes, human and divine? How can the sentiment of the Divinity, which arises from the incessant, free development of the human mind, be felt by those in whom the mind is poisoned, disfigured, arrested, in the cradle? No; there is evidently a perverted Christianity as well as a perverted morality, tending to establish itself in the regions where slavery flourishes—a tenfold more revolting monstrosity than that of the Mormons—a monstrosity similar to that which would be offered by Christianity, mutilated and corrupted, so as to be adapted to the condition of the gladiator and of his master

Glabrio, in Halm's drama. The partisans of slavery are fully aware that human thought not only heals the wounds of the heart, but that it is a hope—awakes conscience, stimulates it, and guides it; that mental liberty, unsullied, tends to the advancement of every other kind of freedom; that the human mind, unshackled, soars high towards the great orb of Truth, and will claim its divine right; hence, a world of hypocrisy—a perpetual outrage to the religion of Christ and its divine principles. Respectable publications, Christian pulpits, uphold slavery—dwell on its blessings—praise the Christian feelings of the master in taking care of the innocent slaves—bemoaning the harsh fate of those who are free. Again and again, it is well known, slaveholders and their clergy have had the effrontery to proclaim that they civilize the slaves—Christianize them, and show the “*spirit of the age*” in being charitable to their fellow-men.

In concluding these observations on the moral of Halm's beautiful drama, we leave to the intelligence and enlightenment of our readers the despicable argument of inferiority of race, sometimes brought forward by advocates of modern slavery, conjoined with the argument of inferior capacity. In the latter case, it would appear a simple duty to elevate the human mind instead of crushing it; and we conceive that many of those who are the most vehement in upholding this inferiority, would justify their being themselves doomed to slavery for the rest of their lives, if it were a sufficient reason. As to the question of races, science has irrefragably demonstrated the unity of the human race, and confirmed the hallowed words: “God has made of one blood all the nations of the earth.”

April, 1859.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

CAIUS CÆSAR CALIGULA.

CESONIA, *his wife.*

CASSIUS CHEREA, *Prefect* } *of the Prætorian Guard.*

CORNELIUS SABINUS, *Tribune* }

CAIUS PISO, } *Senators.*

TITUS MARCIUS, }

FLAVIUS ARMINIUS, } *Roman Knights.*

GALLUS, }

VALERIUS, }

THUSNELDA, } *Prisoners at Rome.*

RAMIS, *her relation,* }

MEROWIG.

GLABRIO, *Master of the School of Gladiators at Ravenna.*

LYCISCA, *his daughter, a flower girl.*

THUMELICUS, }

KEYX, }

GNIPHO, }

APER, }

CELIUS, *Porter.*

Gladiators.

Senators, Knights, Gladiators, Slaves, Guards.

The scene is laid at Rome.

THE
GLADIATOR OF RAVENNA.

ACT THE FIRST.

A Hall in the Gardens of MARC ANTONY. Arcades in the background, the middle one of which forms the principal entrance by a curtain which can be drawn, presenting the perspective of the gardens. Doors on the right and left. On the walls of the hall, niches with statues on high pedestals. On the steps of the latter, as well as under the arcades, Gladiators are lying down in various groups. On the right, near the pedestal of the first statue, lies THUMELICUS ; on the left, near the opposite statue, KEYX, APER, and GNIPHO.

The Porter, CELIUS, and GLABRIO, Master of the Gladiators at Ravenna, enter by the principal entrance on the left.

CELIUS.

I tell you it cannot be !

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GLABRIO.

Just listen to me, and answer me! I am Glabrio, the master of the school of gladiators of Ravenna; and it is Caius Cæsar who sent me the order to bring to Rome, for the next games in the circus, my gladiators—of course the best and most plucky lads—and I bring them, as before, in the gardens of Marc Antony, where they found attendance and accommodation; and you now come and tell me it cannot be! no, I cannot allow it!—

CELIUS.

Now only hear me! It is impossible here, in the left wing, which is used for a state prison. For yourself and your men there is the right wing at your service. There can be found also a most quiet place for yourself, if you require it.

GLABRIO.

Oh, indeed! in the right wing! I have made a mistake! And here on the left, do you say?—in truth a very singular state prison! Doors wide open, no guards!—or, is it empty?

CELIUS (*showing the side door on the left*).

We have had here for a long time two German women, but in a very light imprisonment. They are permitted to saunter here and in the gardens without guards; still, you understand that

GLABRIO.

Good, all right! I must go to the right wing only with my lads.

CELIUS.

Where are they?

GLABRIO.

There, yonder, under the arcades, and here on the steps, where each of them as he pleases stretches his weary limbs. And what limbs! only see (*striking with his foot GNIPHO, who is lying on the left of the foreground*). Up, Gnipho! stretch your arms! Only just see these muscles and this chest (*striking the chest of GNIPHO with the palm of his hand*). How full, and how it sounds! Then, these two! Keyx, here!—He may be called a second Hercules; the king of my band—who surpasses all the others, as a falcon among a flock of cranes.—

THUMELICUS (*starting up, with a movement of anger, and, aside*).

Go on with your lies, go on, and may you be choked therewith.

GLABRIO.

And that one—come here, Thumelicus! Now, I beg of you, look at this youth. Is that a

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specimen? Only twenty-two years old, as handsome as Apollo, and as fresh as a rose. He is one of those who turn women's heads. How they will eye him, and yearn for him when he comes out for the fight.

KEYX (*lying down on the left, to himself*).

Vile trading soul!

GLABRIO (*leaning his hands on his sides, to CELIUS*).

What say you? Have I not brought fine fellows for Cæsar?

CELIUS.

Really you have. The merchandize is splendid. But, now come and show yourself to the tribune, that he may hasten to announce your arrival to Cæsar.

GLABRIO.

True; but before my lads are examined by Cæsar, I must have them to bathe and breakfast.

CELIUS.

Good, good! I will attend to it. (*They go out by the principal entrance, on the left*).

THUMELICUS (*advancing in great excitement*).

O gods, give me patience, or drive me mad!—King!—he, the king of our band!—it makes me laugh!—the king Keyx!—halloo, Gniphos!—

GNIPHO.

What is it?

THUMELICUS.

You are on good terms with him?

GNIPHO.

With whom?

THUMELICUS.

With Keyx—with our king! Ask him then for me, if perchance he is not a descendant of king Midas.

KEYX (*standing up suddenly, whilst APER rises also*).

What is this, scamp? Are you picking a quarrel with me?

THUMELICUS (*warming up more and more*).

Yes, mountebank Hercules! king of nothing and of nothingness.

GNIPHO.

You are out of your mind.

APER (*who has gradually drawn close to THUMELICUS's right side*).

All right, my young fellow; give it him well, and a little more than what he deserves.

THUMELICUS (*to KEYX*).

Yes ! you owl, and not a falcon ; yes ! I am picking a quarrel !

KEYX.

Then try and pick it elsewhere ; I have no time to give you a flogging.

THUMELICUS (*darting upon him, while the gladiators rise and come nearer, attracted by curiosity*).

By all the gods—insolent !

GNIPHO (*holding back THUMELICUS, and drawing him away*).

Hold back ! be calmed ! come to your senses ! keep the peace !

KEYX.

Yes ! take him away, and get a doctor for him ! The lad will go mad with vanity, and all this because Glabrio, our master, calls him a fresh rose, and because Lycisca, the worthy child of our worthy master, lies on his bosom when she is drunk with lust, in her vacant hours !

THUMELICUS.

She would not do as much for you, envious churl !

GNIPHO (*endeavouring to draw him away*).

Come now, be steady, come!

KEYX.

Not so much for me? She has kissed me also—very often kissed me—dear booby! Whom has she not kissed?

THUMELICUS (*getting loose from GNIPHO, and rushing upon KEYX*).

You lie like a dog! (*He strikes him*.)

KEYX (*returning the blow*).

You want blows? then here are some!

GNIPHO (*interfering*).

No, that must not be! stop!—

APER (*coming to the assistance of THUMELICUS*).

Strike on! I will help you, brother!—

(*A tumult; some gladiators endeavour to stop the fight, others mix in it.*)

GLABRIO (*who during the last words has appeared in the background on the left, rushes, with his whip raised, among the fighting gladiators*).

Thunder and lightning! keep off, scoundrels!

Is it too long, then, since you have tasted the whip ?
(*He strikes them.*) Now separate, clumsy savages !
Do you think, then, that I have stuffed you with
gruel-soup, with mutton and cakes of maize, for you
to go and tan your skins for your own pleasure ?
You have to bring it to the circus—it is not yours !
Now mark this, you lads, go off to the right wing ;
go on, away !

(*The gladiators, excepting KEYX and THUMELICUS, withdraw slowly in the background, on the left.*)

GLABRIO (*striking KEYX, who is slow in going away*).

Now, do you hear, Keyx ?

KEYX.

So, you strike me ; but it was he who began the row, and he goes untouched ! Good, he will pay for it ! To the pleasure of seeing you again in the circus, fresh rose !

(*He goes out also on the left, at the end of the stage.*)

THUMELICUS (*rushing after him violently*).

Yes, in the circus, yes—impudent humbug !

GLABRIO (*taking him by the hand, and bringing him back to the front*).

Remain! Do not move away!—how, what is the matter, my boy? you seem quite bewildered!

THUMELICUS.

If ever you have really been kindly disposed towards me, show it to-day, and let me be opposed to Keyx in the next combat of the circus.

GLABRIO.

To Keyx! humph! The lad has already seen some blood; he is strong and brave, and a master in his business.

THUMELICUS (*sneering*).

A Hercules, is he not? Far beyond us all, as a falcon over cranes? The king of our troop? It may be that it is so, but if it is so, I will not live.

GLABRIO.

Oh, you hot-headed! Why stick to words? Every merchant praises his merchandize! You fight as well and as skilfully as he does, and, if he is stronger, you are more dexterous. Enjoy then your own worth, and let him have his.

THUMELICUS.

The man who has insulted Lycisca ought not to live !

GLABRIO.

He has outraged her ? That only proves that she has treated him with contempt. Don't let such provocations disturb you ! Learn also that Lycisca is following us.

THUMELICUS. -

Lycisca at Rome ?

GLABRIO.

She has quarrelled with Marcus Vivius, you know—the lame fellow, who was her friend—and she is now coming to seek her fortune in Rome.

THUMELICUS.

To seek her fortune ? And what do you call seeking one's fortune ?

GLABRIO.

Ay, one cannot live with nosegays and garlands. Don't you belong yourself, body and soul, to Cæsar, and must you not expose both according to his caprice ? You are not your own master, nor is she her own mistress. Who wishes to live must serve. So goes the world.

THUMELICUS.

So that what Keyx said was true? and her charms are a mere merchandize, and I——

GLABRIO.

Well, yes. Do you think she is to belong to you alone? That is a very stupid affair. A pretty woman and the sun belong to everybody; every one can enjoy them without wronging others. I must be off to have myself announced at the palace; but you, in order that you may not again begin the quarrel, you must not join the others, but remain here; I give up to you my own little room, which had been reserved for me here (*showing a side door on the left*). This way, my son; be calmed and get some rest, till the bath is ready. If Lycisca comes, I will send her to you. Now, will that do? naughty boy! Now, above all, no fretting; for that makes one pale and thin. Go to rest, my son, go! (*During the last words they have reached the door on the left; THUMELICUS withdraws by it.*) Only think of this boy who amuses himself with being jealous! What silly nonsense! (*He goes out on the left: after a pause, the side door on the right opens.*)

RAMIS.

The wild noise is over; they are gone. Why

do you delay? Come, Thusnelda, let the breath of the spring air revive you, and refresh your fatigued breast in the May-breeze (*THUSNELDA makes her appearance*). You remain silent, and sorrow and gloom appear to lie still heavier on your soul. Speak, my beloved! What are your thoughts about? Speak!

THUSNELDA.

Nothing! For, what are idle and confused thoughts, powerless rage, prayer without hope, and hatred and love which find not their expression—what are they? a world of sorrows, and nevertheless nothing—a mere hollow nothingness.

RAMIS.

Enough, Thusnelda! Come out among the green trees, and turn your thoughts away from your sorrow.

THUSNELDA.

Turn them off? And where must I turn, not to meet the curse and tormentor of my life—that Rome, Rome ever, and everywhere? Look to the future? on a grave, on the Roman soil? If otherwise, I look on the present, I meet with these walls, in which Rome keeps me buried alive. If I think of the past, is it not Rome again that has

poisoned my youth? Is it not Rome which, with subtle, deceitful words, has deceived and caught my old father, till he, Segest, the free German prince, a perjurer to his people, despising my supplications, became the spy and slave of the Roman general; and when Armin, afterwards the best man in Germany, asked my hand, that Segest rejected him—refused harshly the adversary of Rome; and when I, on a dark night, on a powerful steed, followed the man of my choice, half resolved, half persuaded, was it not Rome again, and always Rome, which placed on the whitening lips of my father the malediction which, now after so many years, is still a thunder which has not ceased to roar and make my heart tremble?

RAMIS.

Cruel sorrows have befallen you, but also the power to suffer them with a calm grandeur. Let this console you; you have shown yourself superior to your destiny in bitter trials, in the hard sufferings of long-yearred captivity; you have proved yourself worthy of your people, of yourself, and of Armin, your noble husband.

THUSNELDA.

Unfortunate me! are you trifling with me? or do you not feel that what you extol in me is my

shame; that the wife of Armin, fallen into the enemy's hands, should have plucked from proud Rome her victory—that she should have set at defiance her omnipotence—that she ought to have died? And I did wish it; I was willing to die. I appeared before Germanicus, with a head lofty and proud, exulting in my victory; already I was looking round to see from which of the Romans, by a rapid movement, I should snatch the sword which was to give me death and liberty. Then, suddenly, I felt something stir in my bosom, and the first presentiment of a new life penetrated me with a secret mysterious delight. The heart of a mother awoke in me, and “live and love” became the cry of its first inspiration. Then, my head bent down—my resolution vanished—and I held out my hands to the chains in silence.

RAMIS.

What! do you repent that you did not destroy another unborn life with your own?

THUSNELDA.

And why have I been unable to do so? Why have I preserved that other life, only to enable Rome to conquer me with greater security, and enable Tiberius, threatening the life of my child, to force my following the triumphal car of Ger-

manicus? Why have I preserved that child, but for them to tear him away from me, and threaten me to rend him asunder, limb by limb, if I ever attempted to put an end to my own existence! Stupid and cruel pity, that has only spared him, to leave him exposed to the outrages of the enemy—to sorrow and shame! Flattering, deceitful voice of nature, which induced me to live, whilst in death dwelt the very flower of life, glory and liberty!

RAMIS.

And if, nevertheless, the voice of your heart had only spoken the truth! If, however tardy, and, consequently, the more resplendent, arose blooming, that felicity which your blind despair considered as lost; Thusnelda, if you were permitted to hope——

THUSNELDA.

Hope! I hope no more.

RAMIS.

Whoever lives, hopes; and you—you live, and soon, ere long, will experience, as never before you experienced—and deeply—what are life and delight! Must I tell you more? Open yourself to joy; the time is come, and freedom is at hand.

THUSNELDA.

Freedom ?

RAMIS.

It was this very morning ; you were still reposing ; you were agitated by feverish, gloomy dreams ; the keeper had just opened the door and iron gate. As I glided out to seek a little freshness, and walked into the thicket, along the wall, which is close to the Gate of the Prætorians, suddenly a stone fell before me, at my feet. I supposed it to be some boyish play. But see ! a second, a third, fell in the same way. I then stood still, and presently words reached my ears, from the other side of the wall—words sung in an undertone, in our sonorous and vigorous language, with the full earnest intonation of our forests ; I listened, and heard this ditty : “ O you who are here imprisoned, freedom is near at hand ! When the heavy burning of mid-day sun weighs down the eyes of vigilance, I will come from the wall below ; only prepare and come again.” So it sang, and I heard steps move away. Calm, but internally exulting, I came in, to make you share my joy ; but found you dumb and distressed, and I remained silent, not to augment your gloom with doubtful news. Now mid-day is blazing, and the moment is come. Now, come out—follow me ; let us go and meet

happiness—the messenger of deliverance whom Armin sends.

THUSNELDA.

Armin is dead !

RAMIS.

The Romans say so. They wish it were so.

THUSNELDA.

And it is so ; it would be impossible for me to be here if I were not a widow.

RAMIS.

Why do you thus distil poison for every felicitous moment, and wormwood for every joyful word ? Come, come, Thusnelda ! (*After a movement of refusal of the latter.*) Do you not come with me ?

THUSNELDA.

No !

RAMIS.

Well, then, I will go alone. Wait here till, on my return, I bring to your heart the ripe fruit of a real happiness. (*She withdraws in the background, on the right.*)

C

THUSNELDA.

So many times deceived, and yet confiding so easily! Overwhelmed by misfortune, and still so full of hope! Ought I to despise her or pity her? And if, perchance, she was in the right? No, the gods no longer know Thusnelda! If they knew her still—if they did cast a glance into the mother's heart, from which her only child has been torn away by force and cunning, and both separated, but united by the horrors of a menace of death—and if they did behold the solitude of my prison and of my soul, and see me cursing my existence, day after day, and still living—despising myself every day, and, nevertheless, daily adding the shame of the day to that of the previous days—Oh! if from their throne of clouds they behold all this, they must weep—shed scalding tears—although they are reigning over the earthly dust, inaccessible to sorrow, blessed gods that they are! But they do not see; they turn away, in sadness, their radiating eyes from the weak base being, who preferred the shame of servitude to immortal glory. The gods no longer know anything of Thusnelda!

RAMIS (*entering rapidly by the principal entrance*).

It is he! He is coming, Thusnelda.

THUSNELDA.

How ! who comes ? What do you mean ?
Speak !

RAMIS.

O day, the most beautiful of any that ever
sent its golden rays to caress dismal earth ! It is
he ! He follows me.

THUSNELDA.

Who, then, follows you ? Speak !

RAMIS.

Here—see yourself.

THUSNELDA (*perceiving MEROWIG, who in the
meantime is entering from the background on
the right*).

What ! do my eyes deceive me ? It is you ?
Yes, the tears flowing on your grey beard tell me
that it is you, Merowig !

MEROWIG (*kneeling*).

Thusnelda ! my sovereign !

THUSNELDA.

Do not weep ; the gods will have it that we
should meet again thus. To them belongs power.
Rise, my friend ; and now, before you speak of

secondary matters, let me know one thing. Speak!
how did Armin die?

MEROWIG.

Then you know, princess——

RAMIS.

What! It was not a falsehood—a mere deceit
and invention?

THUSNELDA.

Silence! no bewailing! I was weeping for him
when you were still hoping. Now, I weep no
more; I only envy him. How died my dear hus-
band? Speak!

MEROWIG.

How he died? I cannot utter.

THUSNELDA.

Speak, without delay.

MEROWIG.

You wish it—I obey. Germanicus, after having
taken you prisoner, was soon called back to Rome.
Armin, in order to deliver you and chastise Rome,
resolved to penetrate in person into Italy. Sure
of the tribes that dwell on the Rhine, the Ems

and the Weser, he sought the alliance of Marbod, King of the Markomans, in order that from the Rhine to the Danube, one united great Germany might advance southwards. But Marbod, puffed up with his own importance, thinking himself powerful enough, and long since jealous of Armin, in whom he only saw a rival—Marbod refused the alliance. Hard words were exchanged; the wrath of the princes led away their respective people; from one end of Germany to the other, were heard menaces and the clang of arms.

THUSNELDA.

So they came to war? and again jealousy, as well as the care of mean private interests, did divide the German people in presence of the common enemy? Did they once more waste themselves in the powerlessness of isolation?—when, if united in power and will, they would be great, invincible, conquerors of the world.

MEROWIG.

It was as you say, and still worse. They fought, and Marbod being vanquished, cast himself into the arms of Rome, which had promised him protection, but where he found slavery. The remains of the Markoman empire flocked round Armin, whose power augmented daily; but with it also the number

of envious, secret enemies, who concealed their hatred, and waited craftily for a favourable moment; and, unfortunately, it came. One night we found the body of our dear hero bleeding in the forest.

RAMIS.

Killed!

MEROWIG.

Basely murdered, the spear penetrating by the back into the heart; that heart the most generous that ever did beat for the honor of Germany.

THUSNELDA.

He, murdered! murdered by his own men! Armin, the hero of the battle of Teutoburg, the saviour! the liberator! Woe to thee, Germany! Woe! Didst thou not implore and beg for a great man? and when the favour of the gods sends him to thee—when he helps thee out of thy wretchedness—then dost thou move away from him in a cowardly manner! Mean souls! shudder before his greatness, and then—woe to Germany! Three times woe! Then, when the saviour has done his work, thou seizest upon the man divinely sent; thou castest him away and and shatterest him to pieces! (*after a pause*) Conclude! Has the deed received its reward, and have the faithful grateful people applauded?

MEROWIG.

No, princess! After the mournful news, a deep silence ensued in the whole land; no praise, no blame was heard. After years only, timid murmurs were heard here and there. At first, better days of a former time were vaguely spoken of; then, the man who had been the author of them was named. And now, through mountains and valleys, far away, flies a unanimous cry of sorrow and yearning for Armin. Now, as far as the Germanic soil extends—from every mouth—in every song and legend—it is proclaimed that no greater man ever lived.

THUSNELDA.

I know them; such is their way! Whatever lives is of little worth to them. They despise it, tread it under foot. Whatever is, has no value. It is what has been, only, that is saved. The greatness of Germany only flourishes over the grave!

MEROWIG.

A name has not only arisen from the grave—his spirit enlightens us, and attracts, guides us on the path of his heroism. The union of all forces was his object—to break down the domination of Rome was his wish; and this yearning burns in

every breast, and all that bear arms are preparing for the struggle. "A united Germany!" Such is the echo through our valleys. "One empire, and one leader!" cry out the people. "But who will be the leader, who will bear the standard?" Then I reminded them that Thusnelda was still living; and that she bore a son to Armin. "Yes!" they exclaimed, "it must be he; he must be our leader—Armin's son."

RAMIS.

O great, good gods!

THUSNELDA.

Is it a fever which thus agitates me? Are they dreams, sporting and deceiving me? Is it true; is it real?

MEROWIG.

Believe me, it is true! Still more. I have been selected with ten companions and sent here to Italy, to deliver you and your son, and bring you back. In order to hasten the work of your deliverance, we have enrolled ourselves in the Germanic legions of Rome; and it thus that I have been able to reach you: and now, receive here, as a pledge and a testimony (*kneeling down*) what Germany sends you, that you may place it yourself

in the hands of your son, and that he may use it as his father has done, for the power and honour of the people.

THUSNELDA.

His sword! The sword of Armin! I know thee well, noble blade, with the plain handle. I know thee well! Such as thou art, so he was also, a most indomitable soul, and most modest man! This is the weapon, but who is to make use of it; my son!——

MEROWIG.

You tremble! what agitates you?

THUSNELDA.

He, the child of sorrow and of captivity; he, my Sigmar, my last consolation. Rome has torn him away from his mother's arms. They have given him a name suited to a slave; and in vain, year after year, I beg and pray to be allowed to see him, for one day only—for one moment! Is he still living? Has death delivered him? I know not. What do you ask of me? The son of Armin? I have him not! Alone, like a withered trunk of a tree, I stand mourning by the way.

MEROWIG.

No! no mourning, Thusnelda; learn that he lives——

RAMIS (*who for some time had gone back to the farther end, returning hastily*).

Go! I hear some noise.

THUSNELDA.

He lives—and where? Where does he live?

MEROWIG.

He hath grown in vigorous youth at Ravenna; and is now, I know it, on his way to Rome.

THUSNELDA.

Here! at Rome?

RAMIS (*as before*).

I hear steps and voices approaching! Away!

MEROWIG (*led away by RAMIS*).

The hour is pressing, only remember this. You will see him again soon; perhaps, this very day. Everything is ready to save you both. Hope, then, and have confidence.

RAMIS.

Come, make haste ; fly !

(They hasten away at the farther end on the right.)

THUSNELDA.

To see him again ! One word more, Merowig ; only one word. See him again ! Am I not dreaming—is it true ? No ; it is not a dream. This is Armin's sword, and am I not to place it in the hands of my son ? Am I not to inflame his courage to noble deeds ? Am I not to place before his eyes the image of his father ? It is my duty, and I will do it. Great and merciful gods ! I have often implored you in the calm dead of night. You have at once intrusted to my hands and to my soul a great destiny—given me a holy mission ; and in accomplishing my task, free from all passions, it is in my power to prove to myself that I am still Thusnelda, the wife of Armin, and worthy of being called a German. You have done it ; you have intrusted to my hands the power, honour, and future of Germany ; and now, here, I promise it solemnly—seize the hand, which swearing, is raised towards you—grasp it and guide it. I will fulfil what you have commanded, I will accomplish it ; and if I succumb, I will be

shattered down like the oak by the tempest. But
I will not yield; I will never yield again!

THUMELICUS (*entering after a pause, by a side
door on the left*).

It is too sultry in that place, I cannot sleep;
and I always see Keyx before me. Eh! who is
that woman with that sword?

RAMIS (*hastening back, without seeing
THUMELICUS*).

He is gone over the wall; and he has got away
luckily as he had come.

THUSNELDA (*meeting her and showing her
THUMELICUS*).

Silence, beware! (*starting suddenly*) O gods!

RAMIS.

What is it? What ails you?

THUSNELDA.

Do you not see? there!—or, he shows himself
to my own eyes only—oh, see! only see!

RAMIS.

By the throne of the gods, it is Armin from
head to foot.

THUMELICUS.

Why do you stare at me so, silly women?
What do you want? Speak!

THUSNELDA.

No; it is not the transfigured shade of Armin
arising from the grave! No, no; your eyes
radiate; your voice resounds; you live—you are
his son; and then—away, tears, with your darken-
ing veil!—then, O then, let me embrace you in
these arms; press you on my motherly heart;
keep you there for ever!

THUMELICUS.

What do you want? Leave me.

THUSNELDA.

You know me no more? But I know you—
here the scar, and there the brown mole! Sigmar,
my son, will you deny the bosom that has nourished
you; the arms which have rocked you in your
slumber?

THUMELICUS.

Sigmar! I have already heard that name

THUSNELDA.

Here, take this sword—take it; it is the in-

heritance of your father. It is as brilliant as the flashes that come from your eyes. Oh, look at me—still longer, better; let my withered soul plunge and revive in the limpid waves of your eyes! O joy! O happiness! thy waves are swelling, and draw me away in their bewildering whirl.

THUMELICUS (*in the arms of THUSNELDA*).

Those eyes! that voice! am I insane?

THUSNELDA.

Be quiet; silence! I hear music! they are the ditties of the fatherland. Listen! how sweet and beautiful! How! is it the morning dawn? Is it night? I see you no more, but I hold you; I will keep hold of you, my son!

THUMELICUS (*supporting her falling*).

She is fainting! she is falling! Help!

RAMIS (*hastening*).

She is falling! keep her up.

THUSNELDA.

My son!

(*She has slipped on the ground from the arms of THUMELICUS; RAMIS kneels by her side; the curtain falls*).

ACT THE SECOND.

Hall of the Imperial Palace, surrounded by colonnades, the entrance of which forms an opening at the farther end, and allows a partial view of the interior of the apartments. On the right and left along the walls, tables and chairs, inlaid with ivory and gold, footstools, &c. In the background, slaves and freedmen. In the middle of the scene, senators and knights, part of whom converse in groups, whilst others walk to and fro. On the right, in the front, FLAVIUS ARMI- NIUS, alone and absorbed, leans on a column. VALERIUS and GALLUS advance forward from the centre, while TITUS MARCIUS comes in from the left.

VALERIUS.

There ; here he comes !

GALLUS,

Welcome, Marcus !

MARCIUS.

Good morning to you, my friends! Caius Cæsar is not yet to be seen?

GALLUS.

No; he has only received yet Cassius and Piso.

MARCIUS (*in an undertone*).

Is it not this Piso whose wife, Livia, was stolen away by Cæsar, ordering afterwards the husband to send her a letter of divorce?

GALLUS.

Yes, so it was; excepting the letter of divorce.

MARCIUS.

How so?

GALLUS.

It was rather, I believe, a draft drawing upon him a large sum.

MARCIUS.

Excellent! admirable!

VALERIUS (*in a low voice and cautioning*).

Silence! be quiet, imprudent fellows! (*Aloud to MARCIUS.*) Were you not invited yesterday to the palace?

MARCIUS.

Yes, I was indeed !

VALERIUS.

And were you very merry there ?

GALLUS.

Was Cæsar cheerful ?

MARCIUS.

At first, too much, and afterwards, almost too little. Cesonia had brought with her Sulla, the mathematician, who was to read the horoscope, as ordered by Cæsar.

VALERIUS.

Why do you stop ?

MARCIUS (*in a low tone, whilst he takes them forward on the left*).

Let us, if you please, move away a little ; I see yonder Flavius Arminius, and I don't trust deserters !

GALLUS.

Now speak, go on !

VALERIUS.

What happened ?

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MARCIUS.

Sulla walked in, bowed in solemn silence, and then presented to Cæsar a small tablet on which was briefly written, "Cæsar, no Brutus menaces thee, but beware of a Cassius!"

VALERIUS.

What say you ? how ?

GALLUS.

A Cassius ! is it possible ? and he—and Cæsar ?

MARCIUS.

He became as pale as death ; then sprang up, and assailed Sulla with harsh words ; but the latter, undisturbed, maintained that the stars had thus spoken. And Cæsar bit his lips with a dumb fury which furrowed his forehead like lightning, and he fixed on the ground his heavy, motionless eyes ; then suddenly burst into laughter, and rubbed his hands together : "I have it," he cried out ; "the danger is over ! Write, quæstor," he called out to Capito, "write ! Cæsar commands that all the Romans bearing the name of Cassius should die under the axe." We all remained mute and thunderstruck ; but the Prefect of the Prætorians, Cassius, the favourite of Cæsar, came forward, and endeavoured to turn

into a joke that awful game, and said, making an effort to be jocose: "Ah! what are you thinking of! I also am called Cassius, and would my head fall under the axe?" Cæsar remained silent, and scanned the man from top to toe, then replied tranquilly: "And what has that to do with it?" then turned round, and Cassius became white to his very lips.

GALLUS (*while CORNELIUS SABINUS comes in on the left*).

That served him right, the venomous mushroom—grown so insolent since a ray of the sun of favour has drawn him out from his foul, fœtid marsh. From my heart, I rejoice at it!

VALERIUS (*in a low voice*).

Speak lower, friends! Cornelius Sabinus, the tribune, the right hand of Cassius, has just come in.

GALLUS.

Don't speak so loud, then, but go on; how did all this end?

MARCIUS.

All well! Cesonia, the empress, began by getting Sulla off; afterwards, between wine and kisses, she got hold of Cæsar, and reckoned how

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many thousands of Cassiuses there were in the army, and what alarm it would create, if the imperial order reached the ears of the legions. And, to be brief, Cæsar resolved at last to confine himself to those Cassiuses who displeased him the most, and thereupon we withdrew.

VALERIUS.

And that was all?

MARCIUS.

Yes, it was all; only, I heard this morning, early, that forty sentences of death had been despatched into the provinces.

VALERIUS.

How, already, this very morning?

GALLUS.

And what happened then?

MARCIUS.

Silence! here comes Cassius.

(CASSIUS CHEREA, *Prefect of the Prætorians, has appeared at the farther end during the last words, coming from the apartments, and advances now, with a few slaves, towards the middle of the stage.*)

CASSIUS (*to the slaves*).

Let the litter be brought forward! Cæsar is gone to the bath; let one of you go and inform the empress of it. (*In the meantime two slaves withdraw. Cassius continues, bowing with hauteur to the other persons.*) But you, consuls, Caius Cæsar is waiting for you! (*Aside, while MARCIUS, GALLUS, VALERIUS, FLAVIUS ARMINIUS, and the others, with the exception of CORNELIUS SABINUS, withdraw bowing, and disappear in the interior of the apartment.*) To work, now, without delay! (*To a third slave.*) I must speak with Cornelius Sabinus; go and fetch him.

CORNELIUS SABINUS (*advancing*).

He is waiting for your orders.

CASSIUS.

My greetings to you, tribune! What do you bring me?

CORNELIUS.

Nothing new, excepting that the gladiators of Ravenna sent for by Cæsar, for the circus, have arrived this morning. This tablet gives the indication of their names, and special style.

CASSIUS (*taking the tablet, which CORNELIUS holds out to him*).

The gladiators of Ravenna! Well, very well; we knew it already.

CORNELIUS.

How has Cæsar slept? And did this beautiful morning find him well?

CASSIUS.

Quite fresh and well, and more gracious than ever.

CORNELIUS (*after a pause*).

We are alone, and in safety, Cassius.

CASSIUS (*after having looked round him*).

Are we so? Well, then, know that the danger increases every day, and something must be done. Not that I will be influenced by trifles, such as, for instance, the trick which Cæsar has just played on young Piso; not even by what happened yesterday to the rich Lepidus—decapitated, because the state treasure being exhausted, it needed his fortune.

CORNELIUS.

And we are here in Rome, and we are Romans!

CASSIUS.

I would even forget that, profaning the antique sacredness of the Dioscuri, he has placed his own image by the side of theirs, and ordered the senate to offer prayers and raise altars of worship to it, as to a protecting god of Latium.

CORNELIUS.

Thus, is there no longer anything sacred ? Does nothing but caprice and insane extravagance now govern the world and human life ?

CASSIUS.

It would almost appear so ; for, to speak the truth, Caligula is ill ; you know it ; he had a sound head, grasping rapidly at things, examining, weighing all ; he spoke well, had a taste for the arts, and protected them ; but for some weeks, while discussing, conversing, he sinks suddenly in a dreamy ferment ; gazes out of himself, then revives suddenly, yells, jumps, dances, then begins again to groan and bewail ; he conceives himself to be poisoned, his life to be in danger ; sinks, trembles, till at last, exhausted, powerless, he totters and falls, as if he were dead : in the night he wanders, sleepless, through the halls, sees spectres here and there in every corner, comes towards them, addresses them, and answers ghostly speeches, which he alone hears.

CORNELIUS.

He is mad, then, mad ! Long perverted by fierce desires, and the abuse of a will without object and without limit, his mind, disorganized and ravaged, loses the real sentiment of things, of

the world, and the measure of their relations ! and does that terrify you ? The very thing which puts him in your power, awakes your anxiety !

CASSIUS.

If he were mad, quite mad, I would not mind it ; but this half blindness, this dead uncertain glance of the inward eyes, this exhaustion of the mind, which suddenly awakes and bounds like a tiger, the object of which cannot be calculated ; it is this which frightens me. The disturbed temper which, this very morning, led him to sign forty sentences of death, might very well also, some day, put my own name as well on his tablets ; in short, I must free myself from this anxiety, and for ever !

CORNELIUS.

How ? You could ——

CASSIUS.

It must be all over with him, and soon ! I know it ; your soul is yearning for ancient Rome ; you are an enthusiast for the greatness of Cassius and Brutus ! Well, then, let us imitate this deed ! He must die ! You are astonished ! You doubt ?

CORNELIUS.

No ; I know that when you advance onwards, I can follow.

CASSIUS.

Let us set to work, then, this very day; I will consult with the senators. You must sift the disposition of the Prætorians. For the rest, we will see at a better time. I see Cæsar approaching!

CORNELIUS (*while CALIGULA appears in the apartments at the farther end with his suite, and advances slowly*).

Who accompanies him?

CASSIUS.

Piso, friend, the same whose wife he has just stolen away; then, Titus Marcius, the chatterer, and all those who flatter, crawl, and are alarmed and tremble for their lives! The old man with a bandage over one eye, who is at this moment arranging the folds of Cæsar's robe, is Flavius Arminius—you know him well.

CORNELIUS.

The brother of Armin, who defeated Varus in the forest of Teutoburg?

CASSIUS.

Yes, the same! and now he arranges the folds of Cæsar's robe.

CORNELIUS.

In his place I should be blushing with shame.

CASSIUS.

It is because he is a German, just as we are Romans.

(During these last words, CALIGULA, leaning on the arm of CAIUS PISO and accompanied by TITUS MARCIUS, VALERIUS, FLAVIUS ARMINIUS, and other senators and knights, has reached the middle of the stage; slaves at the farther end.)

CASSIUS *(to the slaves, after having bowed to*
CALIGULA).

Ho, there! let the litter be brought!

CALIGULA.

You think that I ought to go to the bath? No, Cassius! I am exhausted. I am ill and fatigued—tired enough to sink down!

CASSIUS.

Bring a chair—a chair to Cæsar!

CALIGULA.

As I was saying to you, Piso, the weight of sovereignty weighs heavily on my soul; the duty

of punishing ruffles my delicate conscience; the desire to be useful exhausts my strength; add to this the dangers and fatigues of my campaign in Germany.

PISO.

From whence you brought laurels which Germanicus himself, your great father, never obtained.

CASSIUS (*aside to CORNELIUS, whilst a chair is brought and placed with a little table in the front of the stage, on the right*).

A dozen slaves dressed as Germans had been ordered to show themselves through the trees; two legions explored the forest and raised some trophies: that was his expedition in Germany.

CALIGULA.

Ah, that expedition! Your hand, Arminius (*supported by ARMINIUS and PISO, he sits on the chair*). We performed prodigies, and the enemies fled away—but you were also with us, Flavius?

FLAVIUS.

Yes, Cæsar.

CALIGULA.

And you saw the Germans run?

FLAVIUS.

Yes, Cæsar, they ran.

CALIGULA.

It would seem as if you were ashamed! You are a German—I know it.

FLAVIUS.

If love for great Rome, and proved fidelity to the service of Cæsar, make a Roman, I am a Roman!

CALIGULA.

Good! well spoken! Thank you. (*A pause.*)

CASSIUS (*coming near CALIGULA*).

You do not seem placid. What cares rob us of your smile?

CALIGULA.

A fit of giddiness, friend—a giddiness only. Strange! I always see the old man before my eyes!

CASSIUS.

What old man?

CALIGULA.

I will tell it you! (*He makes a sign. All present withdraw a few steps, excepting PISO and*

MARCIUS, *who stand behind his chair, and CASSIUS, who stands before ; they remain near.*) This very night, after Livia had left me in confidence, Piso, she is a woman that cannot be compared to any other !

PISO.

You make me proud, my Cæsar !

CALIGULA.

She was gone, then, and I was reclining, sleepless and fatigued. Suddenly the curtain is gently drawn, and who glides within ? My cousin Drusus, who poisoned himself ; then Silanus, my father-in-law, who, in the bath, cut his own throat instead of his beard ; the fool was holding out to me the bleeding knife, as if I had sharpened it ;—and finally came Tiberius, my uncle, with a pillow, the same pillow with which my enemies say—how they lie, my enemies !—that I smothered him to death ; and these three take each others' hands, and they began (*with a convulsive laugh*)—I thought I should laugh to death ; it was really too comical, too absurd—they began to dance, at first slowly, and then quicker and quicker, continuing to form a circle round me, narrower and narrower ; they press upon me more and more (*uttering a shriek*). There ! only see, Cassius !—there they are again. Away !—I will

not—away! Oh, their cold hands! away from my forehead! (*He falls back bewildered in his chair.*)

PISO (*turning away, aside*).

Horrible!

MARCIUS (*in the same manner*).

Frightful!

CASSIUS (*aside*).

My hair stands on end; my blood freezes in my veins! (*Aloud.*) A physician; let a physician be sent for.

CALIGULA (*springing up in wild excitement*).

Stop! I won't have it. No physician, as sure as I am Cæsar; and whoever talks and discusses—away with his head! (*After a pause, in a composed and tranquil manner.*) Cassius, how do my yellow Hyrcanian hounds get on—I mean the six lions which Tubero has sent me from Damascus?

CASSIUS.

They have had their rest, and now appear fresh and ferocious enough. You can, when you like, have them to fight.

CALIGULA.

So much the better. Did you not also say something about gladiators?

CASSIUS.

I spoke of those who arrived to-day from Ravenna; this tablet contains their number and names.

CALIGULA (*looking at the tablet presented to him*).

Here, fifty heads; and without reckoning those of Capua and Nola. Good! what a butchery it will make! How the red liquor of life will flow! How delightful the vapour of the blood will be to my senses! (*Suddenly throwing the tablet on the table.*) Poh! all this is worn out and insipid! Is there no new spice for the palled palate; no new stimulants for the debilitated, worn out nerves?

CASSIUS (*who had turned towards the farther end*).

Room! make room, if you please—the Empress!

CESONIA (*accompanied by a few women, who remain in the background. She advances in the middle of the stage*).

The gods be praised! I find you still! I almost feared I was coming too late!

CALIGULA.

Happiness never comes too late! And beauty is welcome whenever it presents itself.

CESONIA.

And are you well? You seem so pale, my Cæsar!

CALIGULA.

But you—you are as brilliantly radiating as Aphrodite! This exquisite robe, which sets in relief more than it veils your noble form; this head, which so proudly waves on your snowy white neck! And when I earnestly think that this beautiful head——

CESONIA.

That this head? Well?

CALIGULA.

That it must fall the moment I order it—it fills me with a two-fold delight! But now, for the present—come, I must rest myself here (*whilst CESONIA leads him back, tottering, to his chair*). But, for the present, I command this fair head to discover something with which we may finish this day!

CESONIA.

You will not, then, go to the bath?

CALIGULA (*in a mysterious low voice*).

No; no bath! It reminds me of Silanus, for it was in a bath that——

CESONIA.

What do we care about the dead? Recover yourself! Let us have some music to invigorate your weakened nerves!

CALIGULA (*as before*).

Music! do you mean to make the ghosts dance?

CESONIA (*turning away, in a low voice to CASSIUS, whilst CALIGULA remains seated, his head sunk down, his eyes heavy and fixed*).

He frightens me! Oh, only see, Cassius, how he stares with his dead eyes! How can I rouse the inanimate filth of this torpid soul? It is in vain that I make every effort, whichever way I turn——

CASSIUS (*in a low voice*).

And yet it must be done! Something must be found! You know he is always more wild and ferocious after these fits of slumbering ferment, and no caresses soothe the diseased tiger.

CALIGULA (*starting up suddenly*).

Cesonia, where are you? Remain near me!

CESONIA (*approaching close to his chair*).

Come, let us go and saunter in the gardens; we will amuse ourselves there with the game of balls.

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CALIGULA.

No—yes! No, I cannot yet persuade myself to take a resolution. My goddess, let us first regulate the deadly conflict which I will offer in the circus. The gladiators are here now! (*Taking up the tablet lying on the table near him, and looking over it.*) Here, see! Thumelicus!—I already have heard that name—I know it! How is it that I know it? Thumelicus!—

MARCIUS (*coming forward*).

Perhaps it is the petition of Thusnelda, which I laid before you yesterday, Cæsar, which causes that name to remain in your memory.

FLAVIUS (*shuddering*).

Thusnelda!

CALIGULA.

How? Thusnelda! Was it not the name of the wife of Armin, who revolted against Varus; and was it not my father Germanicus who took her prisoner when he appeared as an avenger in the forests of Germany?

MARCIUS.

It was precisely so. It is your glorious father who brought her to Rome.

CALIGULA.

And when she refused to follow the car of the conqueror at the triumph of Germanicus, did not my uncle Tiberius order the child of Armin she had given birth to in her captivity to be torn away from her, and did he not threaten her ?

MARCUS.

Yes, he threatened to destroy the child if she persisted in resisting the order, and she obeyed.

CALIGULA (*to himself*).

He knew what he was about—the old man of the pillow ! (*Aloud.*) And now, tell me, what does Thusnelda want of me ? What does she ask ?

MARCUS.

She begs for a favour which, hitherto, has been as often refused as implored by her—that, after so many years, she may be, once only, allowed the happiness of seeing her son, who has been brought up, away from the mother, at the school of gladiators, at Ravenna, by order of Tiberius.

CALIGULA.

What do you say ? how ? Is it possible ? At Ravenna ? Thumelicus !

MARCIUS.

He is her son.

CALIGULA.

Thumelicus, the son of Armin and Thusnelda !

FLAVIUS (*aside*).

The son of Armin, my nephew !

CALIGULA.

See, only just see, how nicely this comes in together ! She longs for her son, and he is here, the son of Armin ! How admirable ! (*Turning to CESONIA.*) What do you think of it, dear ? Could not, with all this, something be done—something such as I delight in ? A game replete with charms—palpitating—a luxurious enjoyment which would not only inflame the senses, but also the mind—a spectacle more exciting than the spices of Taprobanus and of all India ?

CESONIA.

What spectacle, and what game, Cæsar ?

CALIGULA.

What game ? A combat ; oh, my sweet innocence ! Only think ; a youth who, under the eyes of his mother, fights, bleeds, and falls ! Such a thing has never been seen yet (*bounding up from his seat*)—never been seen since the sand of the circus drank blood for the first time.

FLAVIUS (*aside*).

Oh, shame ! Oh, cruel anguish and execration !

CALIGULA (*after having rapidly walked up and down the stage, suddenly stopping before CESONIA, with an expression of irresolution*).

And all this, after all, well considered, is nothing more than a hollow shallow, a nothingness, devoid of any meaning !

CASSIUS (*low, to CESONIA*).

Now let your sharpness be at work. Let not the plaything, once seized, escape the languid hand.

CALIGULA.

What is, after all, to me this son of Armin ? A truly inoffensive thing—an enemy made of broth—only a gladiator ; and then, as his victory is impossible, would it be becoming in me to triumph if he falls ?

CESONIA.

How, is it not already a triumph that the race of Armin should no longer appear formidable to your greatness ? Is it not a triumph that the son and the mother, who were kept as hostages formerly by your uncle, should come to nothing more—should remain debased—but still good enough for a mere show, a spectacle to amuse the circus ?

CASSIUS (*low, to CESONIA*).

Excellent, only go on !

CESONIA.

Is it not a triumph, that whilst your father, who fought for years with the Germans without subduing them, that you, his son, greater than he, should win the real victory ; that you should first really subdue the Germans ; for it is not he who conquers in a bloody battle, but he who despises and makes a laughing stock of his enemy, who in truth gains a great victory.

CALIGULA.

Yes, you are in the right. It is that which gives significance and reason, as well as sense, to this frivolous, puerile game ! Now, the whole image stands before my soul : Thusnelda, with the crown of oak in her hair ; her son, with the dress and arms of the Germans, falling under the blows of an opponent wearing my own purple and with my own sword,—let all this proclaim loudly, like the thunder of Jupiter, the fall of Germany and the triumph of Caligula !

CASSIUS (*whispers to CESONIA*).

Now we are saved !

FLAVIUS (*to himself*).

Oh, gods ! help and mercy !

CALIGULA.

Some wine ! Bring me some wine ! and let me hear the music. (*to CESONIA.*) Come to my arms, sweet enchantress ! You alone—a woman alone—could think of such a thing. Come to my arms ! for I revive—I am well again ; I have had a wish and an object ; they stand before me ; I can have a will again, and so I can still live.

CASSIUS (*aside*).

Not much longer, or the stars of Sulla have told a lie !

CALIGULA.

Wine ; get me some wine ! Let this day be a feast, since it has brought with glee the treasures of a new yearning on the desolate shores of my existence (*music behind the scene continues till the end of the act*). You, Cassius, bring before me, immediately, the gladiators of Ravenna ; you, Piso, transmit immediately my compliments to the Senate, and tell the fathers that I invite them all to be present at the triumph of Caius Cæsar ! What do you delay for ? Go ! hasten ! (*PISO goes out. Slaves enter with amphora and golden cups.*)

CESONIA (*seizing upon a cup*).

Here, Cæsar, here is some wine.

CALIGULA (*grasping at the cup filled by CESONIA*).

Thanks, Hebe ! This cup to the good luck and joyful success of my game !

CASSIUS.

And to whom do you intrust the functions of ædile ? Who is to take charge of the general order, and of the preparations of the circus, for this festival ?

CALIGULA (*the cup in his hand, looking round*).

Who will be the ædile ? Upon whom shall I confer this dignity ? (*After a pause.*) Flavius Arminius, come near ! You, who formerly on the banks of the Weser closed your ears and your heart to the prayers of your brother, and remained immoveably faithful to your standard ; you, you who are only a Roman, and no longer a German ; it is you whom I invest with the dignity of the ædileship on this occasion.

FLAVIUS.

Me, Cæsar ! me ?

CALIGULA.

Go to Thusnelda, and take to her the son she has so much longed for ; let her have possession of him till the game begins ! Then he must fight under his mother's eyes, and she must behold whatever

his fate will be. This is my will; go and let her know it, and be careful that it is executed in every point. If it were otherwise, if you were more German and less Roman than you pretend to be, then, hypocrite, by all the thunders of Jupiter (*he dashes the cup at his feet*), then your head should roll down at my feet like this cup! (*In a low voice, to CESONIA.*) What do you think of it, my dove? I hold now the whole race of Armin; I have them all in my net! (*Aloud.*) And now let us away! Let the clear tones of the flutes resound! Let the songs be mingled with the clashings of the cups! Let our rejoicings ascend and resound up to the very heavens, and their echo's murmur descend down to the very hell! I do revive! To live is to enjoy!

(He goes out, conducting CESONIA. The other persons follow them in disorder.)

FLAVIUS (*advancing*).

Accursed he who dreams, and who, when awaking from the dream, finds himself the tool of ferocious caprice, and of a merciless power!

(The curtain falls.)

ACT THE THIRD.

(*The scene the same as in the first act.*)

GLABRIO *draws on after him* LYCISCA (*who has a crown of roses in her hair, several others round her arm, a basket of flowers in her hand*) *in the front of the stage from the farther end.*

GLABRIO.

No; not to the Forum! You must come here; it is here that I want you.

LYCISCA.

And may I know at last—when, scarcely arrived, I was ready for my business, the buyers already surrounding me like a swarm of bees—may I know why you make me leave the busy market for this gloomy house?

GLABRIO.

Why? why? Because I am at my wit's end; because I cannot get on any more; because I am

done up, and my arms are knocked up with having laid it on my rogues; because you must bring the lads to an understanding. You must bring peace among them.

LYCISCA (*laying down the basket and crown near her*).

Now, what has happened? tell me.

GLABRIO.

Quarrels upon quarrels; at first, on account of you, between Thumelicus and Keyx.

LYCISCA.

The madcaps!

GLABRIO.

Then, the youth, Thumelicus, has found his mother, a German woman, who is kept a prisoner here in Rome. This woman being, as well as her husband, of princely birth——

LYCISCA.

Is it possible? How, then, Thumelicus himself must be a prince! And we, who treated him with so much familiarity. It is to be hoped that his ancestors will not take it ill!

GLABRIO.

That is precisely a misfortune! You speak

exactly as all my lads speak: "My prince, my king!" went from mouth to mouth, intermingled at times with the words, "Man of the woods! German bear!" And another would tease him with a new song.

LYCISCA.

And he?

GLABRIO.

His fists fell upon them, right and left, like hail; and, as the others would not remain behind in blows, so, I was obliged to come to the whip; and, as I was telling you, I have sprained my arm by dint of flogging. Now, therefore, I must have you here, to establish peace among them, and make my lads manageable again. For, they are to encounter each other in the circus, to-morrow, and you know that they must not have any agitation of mind before the combat; above all, Thumelicus, who particularly attracted the attention of Cæsar, in the review of the gladiators he passed to-day; he recommended me to take great care of him, in order that the lad might display great heart and bravery in the circus.

LYCISCA.

You need not care about this; the youth knows his business, and is as brave as a lion.

GLABRIO.

Poh! knows his business? The sand of the circus is burning, and to enter it for the first time, and handle a mortal, shining blade, instead of a wooden sword; and have, above all, such an opponent as Diodor——

LYCISCA.

What! assuredly not Diodor the Cappadocian, the Son of Victory, as they call him here, because no one, yet, has been able to overpower that Colossus?

GLABRIO.

That is the very man selected by Cæsar to be his opponent!

LYCISCA.

Then, Cæsar has determined upon the death of Thumelicus, for, die he must; he must fall!

GLABRIO.

You talk nonsense! in the conflict, those who fall are those only who are to fall; the issue is always uncertain; and if the lad comes forward, as he may, with boldness and coolness, with a clear head, who knows to which side victory may turn? But you must set right his excited head; you must dispel from his forehead the veins swollen

by passion, so that, to-morrow, his eyes may not be obscured by the agitation of anger and hatred; play some tricks upon him; you must caress him!

LYCISCA.

No! I must at first put him in a rage, that all his wrath may fall upon me, so that remorse afterwards may leave him prostrate in my power!

GLABRIO.

Well, well! I will not teach you your business; only tell him—for he is very fond of showy dresses—tell him that he is to fight in the costume of a German.

LYCISCA.

Is it to be so?

GLABRIO.

And not a word about Diodor!—tell him rather that Keyx is to be his opponent.

LYCISCA.

And if Diodor kills him?

GLABRIO.

Who can know that? Thousand curses! Well, after all, if it were so——

LYCISCA.

Oh, it is true! he is only a gladiator! He is trained to perish in disgrace, in the same way as I am to live in a state of shame! What are we? What are our lives, provided Rome is amused?

GLABRIO.

Are you mad? What is the meaning of all this? None of your nonsense, if you please! none of your sentimental pity! none of your agitation, if you please, unless you are anxious to taste a few lashes of my whip. To your own advantage—to gold and pleasures—to those things you must see; all the rest is no concern of yours—all the rest is stuff! But be quiet—here he comes! Only see how he is heated; see, how he is excited, with wild bloodshot eyes! By all the gods! is that a state for a lad who to-morrow is to fight in the presence of Cæsar? To work then, my girl—make the best of him! make the most of your skill! As for myself, I will quietly away.

THUMELICUS (*while THUMELICUS comes forward on the right from the farther end, GLABRIO disappears on the left*).

The plague be on my destiny! When I was a child I wanted a mother; I was then bereft from her, and now that I could do very well without

her, I find her. I am, they say, of princely blood, still I have nothing and am worse than nothing; and all the advantages I have derived from the discovery of my princely origin, are the insults of those scoundrels! They have called me Prince of Bears,—King of Beggars! But, beware! it is all engraven here (*striking his breast*), and you will pay for it!

LYCISCA (*who until now has remained back on the right, throwing down her flowers and crowns, as if her basket had fallen accidentally*).

Oh, my flowers!

THUMELICUS.

How? you, Lycisca, here in Rome! Do I see right—is it you?

LYCISCA (*kneeling, busy with her flowers*).

And is that all?—"You here in Rome!" And you don't condescend to stoop and help me to pick up my flowers!

THUMELICUS (*perceiving the basket and flowers*).

Flowers! what, you have already provided your trade with a stock, and scarcely arrived you begin again your ugly business, to annoy me?

LYCISCA.

How—ugly? Are my flowers ugly? Only see those roses, and these anemones——

THUMELICUS.

Away with you! Is this a flower-market? away, I tell you! go and seek other buyers!

LYCISCA (*having filled again her basket and placed her crowns on it*).

So I will go away, naughty grumbler, who can only scold and be cross! The consular whom I just now met was much more polite; a man in years, with his hair already grey; he laughed, pinched my cheek, and threw this tablet in my basket (*rising and showing him a tablet*). Here, only read! but I forgot that you cannot read.

THUMELICUS.

I will not! I don't want to know it!

LYCISCA.

Only just listen: (*she reads*)—"O you, with your roses, rosy maid, what are you selling? roses or yourself—or perhaps both at the same time?"

THUMELICUS.

And you call that polite? Now, by all the gods, the lashes of the whip are also politeness!

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LYCISCA (*coming close to him*).

Naughty boy, be good ! You must understand and take a joke ! Come, come, my wild fellow, let us have peace ! What is that old man to us ? Look at me and smile You will not ? But what is this hanging from your girdle, tossing about ? What are you going to do with this butcher's knife ?

THUMELICUS.

Let it alone ; what matters it to you ?

LYCISCA.

Only tell me what it is !

THUMELICUS.

My father's sword.

LYCISCA.

Ah ! what do you say ? And who, then, was your father ?

THUMELICUS.

His name was Armin ; he was a German prince ; and he defeated the Romans in the wood of—how did the mother call it ?—in the wood of Teutoburg !

LYCISCA.

German ! German ! How ugly that word sounds !

A German prince! Then you yourself must be a German prince, like your father?

THUMELICUS.

How! will you also insult me like the others—call me a man of the woods and a bear's-hide? Do you dare to do so, girl?

LYCISCA.

O ye good gods! no; nothing of the sort!—Nothing. I do not want to insult you; I have no thought of the kind. Oh, how you frighten me! My knees tremble under me. Why does a word make you so furious? Although I confess I should not like, myself, to be a German, still it is, after all—only—

THUMELICUS.

An unlucky thing, only; is it not so? that is what you mean? Now, really, to come as you do, daubed over, bring yourself to the market, there to be a show, to giggle, and ogle right and left, and sell for infamous gold your infamous favours—truly, this is something more than an unlucky thing; it is a vile shame!

LYCISCA (*sobbing*).

Well, well! Such are the thanks I get for having followed you from Ravenna — and to

have hastened away from the market; I could not come away quickly enough to see you again, and you——

THUMELICUS.

Now, be still! Why do you bewail thus?

LYCISCA.

O yes, despise me, insult me. It only serves me right! Why have I been such a dolt as to love you, and why am I so reluctant to leave you?

THUMELICUS.

Don't weep. It exasperates me when I see you weep! Come, wipe away your tears. Only think! My blood was heated by the strange words of my mother, by the jokes of my companions, by the insults of Keyx, and then, you come also to crown all——

LYCISCA.

Me! By all the gods! I thought it splendid that a German prince—for, once more, you are a German prince—should appear to-morrow in the circus armed in the German fashion.

THUMELICUS.

In the circus? Me? Armed in the German fashion?

LYCISCA.

Only think ! A helmet with the wings of a vulture, the skin of a wild beast upon your shoulders, and a shield beautifully embossed ! But you remain cold at all these things—they do not delight you ! Still, you used to be very fond of dazzling costumes, and of foreign arms, and now——

THUMELICUS (*warmly*).

No, I tell you. No ! I will not ! I will not fight with German arms.

LYCISCA.

Have you lost your senses (*watching him and intentionally*) or, is it your mother who has dissuaded from it ?

THUMELICUS.

My mother ? To me ? She does not even know——

LYCISCA.

She does not know that you are a gladiator ? You have made a secret of it to her ?

THUMELICUS.

She asked nothing on the subject. Why should I tell her ?

LYCISCA.

Then, by Heaven ! what prevents you ?

THUMELICUS.

I will not fight dressed as a bear. I will not be a laughingstock. I will not again undergo the jokes of those scoundrels.

LYCISCA.

How? You fear jokes and ridicule for yourself? and I delight, on the other hand, at the chastisement you will inflict on every one of them; but it is you who will make them repent.

THUMELICUS.

Me, chastise them; and how? In what way? Speak!

LYCISCA.

You ask how? They have insulted your German birth; they have called you names; such names as bear, man of the woods. Well, if to-morrow, in their very teeth, as in defiance of their ribaldry, you enter the circus, dressed as a German, and if you gain the victory—and I am sure you will conquer——

THUMELICUS.

To beat them as a German? Yes, that is it!

LYCISCA.

And if Keyx is your opponent!

THUMELICUS.

Keyx, do you say ?

LYCISCA.

If that hateful, bragging fellow, torn by the claws of the German bear, falls down at your feet, bleeding in the dust, say, is it not a punishment—a vengeance ?

THUMELICUS.

To behold Keyx face to face in the circus ! Oh ! if I only could get hold of him there, before me, our eyes glaring upon each other ! Oh ! if I could only pluck out from his maw his blasphemous tongue ! Oh ! if to-morrow could only be here now !

LYCISCA.

So that you will fight ? Seriously, you will ?

THUMELICUS.

May this hand wither if, to-morrow, it does not bathe itself in the blood of Keyx !

LYCISCA.

You no longer object to the German costume ?

THUMELICUS.

To have the pleasure of striking down that scoundrel Keyx, I would put on a fool's cap and jacket.

LYCISCA.

Your eye flashes up ; your cheek is glowing ; it is thus that you charm me ; you are again my handsome, beloved gladiator ! and for this you will have No, not yet, not now ; early this evening, on my return ; and if I find you fresh and sprightly, as you are now, then you shall have—a kiss !

THUMELICUS (*seizing her, whilst she tries to escape*).

Why not now ? Let me have it now !

LYCISCA (*escaping from his arms*).

No ! Let me go !

THUMELICUS (*pursuing her*).

You must now ; I must have it.

LYCISCA (*escaping again*).

No, no ; not before this evening.

THUMELICUS (*seizing her*).

Now, this very moment.

THUSNELDA (*entering the door on the right*).

My son ! (*Advancing a few steps whilst THUMELICUS lets LYCISCA go.*) Who is this woman ?

LYCISCA (*to THUMELICUS*).

Is that your mother?

THUSNELDA.

And you, who are you; speak?

LYCISCA (*having taken up her basket and garlands*).

As you see, a woman, like yourself, only somewhat younger, not high-born, but fair and pleasing; by no means a princess, but a Roman. I am a flower-girl, and, like my roses, I bloom; and I sting as much as I can. Now you know me well, German princess! (*sending a kiss to THUMELICUS*). This evening! (*She goes out, on the left, at the farther end.*)

THUSNELDA (*after a pause*).

I know, my son, that debased souls are not expected to feel any respect for misfortune; they can only mock and insult it. And I am not surprised that this creature should have shown herself such as those of her kind, rude and brutal. What astonishes me is, that you should think her worthy of you, and that your love—for, confess it, you love her.

THUMELICUS.

Me? Well, yes! I am well disposed towards her. She is a pretty thing, very pretty, and sometimes amuses me.

THUSNELDA.

How? Have I understood right? She only amuses you? She is only a pastime of your leisure hours? You love her not—perhaps, scarcely esteem her? In Germany, my son, woman is honoured. The rudest warrior respects in every woman the mother who has borne him in her bosom; and he receives with faith the prophetic words from the sacred lips of the chaste virgins.

THUMELICUS.

In Germany, it may be; but, here, we are in Rome!

THUSNELDA.

Yes, we are in Rome, and have been there but too long! Enough! Hitherto I have only inhaled the delight—only lived with the happiness of seeing you again. Now, let us seriously look forward! Let us look on the future that opens magnificently before you. My son, the destinies of a trembling world rest on your head, and in your hands.

THUMELICUS.

You speak again in a way quite incomprehensible to me.

THUSNELDA.

You will learn to understand me! For the

present, only answer this ; you know, Sigmar, that you are born the son of Armin ; let me hear now, what became of you, when away from my solicitude, in the hands of our enemies ?

THUMELICUS.

What became of me ? You see it ; I have grown tall, strong, and vigorous.

THUSNELDA.

The gods be thanked for having given you strength, the best inheritance of man ! But tell me how has Rome cultivated your strength ? Has it been lowered to servile functions ? To the plough, perhaps ; or have you been put into a workshop, and have you been forced to learn a menial business ?

THUMELICUS.

I have never handled any other tool than the sword. To handle a blade, such is my business.

THUSNELDA.

They, themselves, have made you a warrior ! Great gods ! I see your decrees in this ; you blind all those whom you intend to destroy. You do not overthrow them. No ; you only throw a grain of sand in their way—you let them glide on till they slip ; then, dragged by their own weight,

they roll down, and fall irrevocably into the abyss dug out by themselves, and which now swallows them up. Ah! now we have them in our power. Thanks, great gods! The Romans have themselves bound the avenging whip on their own backs; they have sharpened the knife destined to pierce their hearts. O gods, you no longer protect them! They are ruined!

FLAVIUS ARMINIUS (*who during the last words has appeared in the farther end and on the left.*)

Thusnelda!

THUSNELDA (*starting*).

Woe to me!

THUMELICUS.

What ails you?

THUSNELDA.

Have you not heard the voice that just called me? I heard it only once before, and never, never, can I forget its deeply hated sound.

FLAVIUS (*advancing*).

Thusnelda! Listen to me!

THUSNELDA (*turning slowly towards him*).

It is him! No delusion deceives me! Yes, it is him! What do you want of me, traitor?—de-

serter of your fatherland,—disgrace of your noble race,—unworthy of it; you whose name blends in an execrable, discordant sound; Rome and Germany, treason and fidelity, slavery and liberty; What do you want of me, Flavius Arminius? Speak!

FLAVIUS.

I know that the sight of me is displeasing to you; and when, years ago, at this very place, I came and offered to you, my brother's wife, consolation and assistance, you sent me away with intense wrath, and with maledictions.

THUSNELDA.

I returned to you what you had once done to Armin! As once, on the banks of the Weser, you replied by insults to high-minded, honourable words, and darted in fury your javelin against your brother, so I launched my curse upon you, I flung my execration at your feet; you went away! Why do you come back?

FLAVIUS.

I left you then, burning with anger; I now return to you, softened down by years and by age, and I had hoped also to find you gentler, more just, having come nearer, not only nearer your grave, but also, nearer a clear insight into truth. It was

not my own will which separated me from my brother; it was the stream of fate that cast us on opposite shores; him one way, myself on the other; and if now his spirit came down from the higher regions, from those regions where peace and truth dwell eternally, I would meet him with as much confidence as yourself, for he is reconciled.

THUSNELDA.

You lie; you would grow pale—you would tremble before his eyes, ashamed—you would turn away your head from his features in his transfigured state, and if you deny it, (*with a rapid movement, bringing before him THUMELICUS, who till then stands aside*) here is Armin; look at him in the face, if you dare!

FLAVIUS (*hiding his face in his hands*).

Armin! Oh, eternal gods!

THUMELICUS.

Only see, what are you doing, mother? This man inspires me with pity.

THUSNELDA (*to THUMELICUS*).

Be as loving and as generous as the sun—be merciful to all—be merciful to the game you pursue—to the enemy whom you strike; but for a

traitor, only hatred—hatred again and ever,—and no mercy.

FLAVIUS.

Well, then, since you are inflexible,—since you show yourself irreconcilable—

THUSNELDA.

Yes, call me thus. Yes, I am irreconcilable ; I am so to the death, with the wicked !

FLAVIUS.

Well then, come out of my soul, where I was nursing you, conciliation, shame, remorse ! out with you ! You reject the affection proffered. Well then, accept my hatred ; and now learn what Cæsar commands you. He orders that to-morrow you should appear in the circus, dressed as a German princess, with the crown of oak in your hair, and be present at the sanguinary games, which he has ordered to be celebrated there.

THUSNELDA.

Me ? In the dress of a princess ! In the circus ? Is it a mockery, or do your odious words imply something more true and distressing ?

FLAVIUS.

Ay ! The proud daughter of Segest begins to

quiver ! Well ! listen again. Caius Cæsar commands that this youth, your son, should exhibit his skill for the first time, to-morrow, in the combat of the circus, before Rome and Cæsar, and in your presence.

THUSNELDA.

How show his skill ? What skill ? You smile, Speak man, dealing with half-words. What misfortune is menacing me ? Say it all, at once.

FLAVIUS.

And you don't know that Rome has spared and preserved your son, as she does with hundreds of others, only to serve as a spectacle to the Roman people, with his flowing blood and bleeding gashes ? Are you not acquainted with that class of men who learn the art of butchering—of assassinating each other according to certain laid down rules, as if it were a science, and who, from the nature of their vocation, have received the appellation of gladiators ? You don't know them ? Well then ! (*Advancing and showing THUMELICUS.*) Here ! you behold one who, to-morrow, is to fight before you—to the death, and with a German garb and German arms !

THUSNELDA.

How ? A combat to the death ?—In German costume ? Sigmar, I don't believe him. Speak to

me ! Are you what that man says ? Are you ?
Speak !

THUMELICUS.

The man speaks the truth. Yes, I am a gladiator.

THUSNELDA.

A gladiator ! you ?

THUMELICUS.

I can fight on horseback and in a car, and I am reputed a master in the management of the scythe and of the nets in that sort of encounter. It is so ! only just ask Glabrio !

THUSNELDA.

The son of Armin ! (*She hides her face in her hands ; after a pause, advances suddenly towards FLAVIUS.*) And so it is ! You do not content yourselves with barbarously murdering the son of Armin and Thusnelda before his mother's eyes, but you invent, fiendish as you all are, to have him slaughtered with the costume and arms of Germany. You endeavour to blend shame—the vilest shame—with murder, and insult, in the race of Armin, great Germany, the land of his birth ! That is what you have arranged. But it shall not be ! You will not succeed. The gods have destined us for another object. Cæsar, you may command and

G

menace. A more glorious destiny—a more glorious, resplendent end, awaits us !

FLAVIUS.

Woman, you are out of your senses ! When Cæsar says yes, it is an order. Who would dare say no ?

THUSNELDA.

I dare ! Tell your master that never will Thusnelda witness in an imperial bloody festival the disgrace of her own son and of Germany ; and that he, the son of Armin, will never consent to make the sword of his father be an instrument of an insulting derision, nor will he appear in the circus to defend his life or obtain plaudits.

THUMELICUS (*bursting out*).

Me not fight ! Do you wish to exasperate me—to drive me mad ?

THUSNELDA.

Oh ! eternal gods !

THUMELICUS.

Me not fight, when the favour of Cæsar has given me Keyx for my opponent ! Not fight ? I am perhaps to go and hide myself like a coward, whilst my companions in the circus will exult in

sending forth to Cæsar their acclamations and cries of death. Am I to let Keyx point me out with his finger, and give him the power of crowing over me, calling me a craven and a puppy? Not to fight, do you say? Rather die at once!

FLAVIUS (*aside*).

Happy man! How I envy him! He does not feel his infamy!

THUSNELDA.

Sigmar, courage is becoming to a man; and you are brave, and you will soon prove it; I take a solemn oath of it, you will soon show it magnificently to proud Rome. But not now—not here. You ought not, must not, waste your vigour and courage in this degrading sport——

THUMELICUS.

How do you say?—a degrading sport! When the whole of Rome stirs up and rises, adorned as for a grand festival,—when Cæsar, the senate, and all the Roman knights proceed to the circus in solemn order, where already overflow the tumultuous waves of the people, roaring and re-echoing from thousands of voices; and when afterwards, on a sign of Cæsar, the barriers of the circus are thrown open before the combatants; and suddenly that multitude falls into a deep silence, as deep as

if the human voice had never existed, and then the signal is given—the struggle commences, blows shower down—one advancing, the other nimbly escaping the attack, darts with a swift skill his net over the helmet of his adversary; the latter disentangles himself, is caught again, strikes, is struck back, bleeds, sinks, and, even in falling, offers his breast to the enemy, receives the last stroke, and expires; and now break out like a waterspout, resounding suddenly like an earthquake, the thundering roars of applause over the head of the delirious conqueror. Roses and laurels pour down upon him; Cæsar smiles upon him, and thousands of voices hail the name of the victor, roaring through the atmosphere—and that is a game? what you call a degrading game? It is victory! It is glory! It is the very essence of life!

THUSNELDA.

You dream of victory! Does not your perverted mind understand that they only kill you to avenge upon the son the victories of the father! And you could——

THUMELICUS.

Fight I will—I must fight!

THUSNELDA.

And Germany, your fatherland, unfortunate

man, which you outrage ! The name of your father, over which you bring profanation ! and the hopes of your mother, which you betray ! Is there nothing left sacred to you ? Are you a gladiator because Rome has called you so, and has trained you to it ? You are the son of Armin—you are a German ! It is to us that you belong.

THUMELICUS.

German ! Roman ! What is all this to me ? I am a gladiator. To fight is my vocation ; and if, on account of your Germany, you are ashamed of my profession, just learn that I am no less ashamed of my German name ! Learn that I blush to be a barbarian. Learn here that I reject solemnly for all times having anything in common with the race and name of Germany ; I was born at Rome—I have been trained in Rome—I am——

THUSNELDA.

Stop, unfortunate man, stop !

THUMELICUS.

I am, and will be, a Roman ! And go you, messenger of Cæsar ! go, and announce to your master that I will fight in the circus to-morrow in the way he has ordered me—to conquer, if it pleases the gods ; to fall and die, if it has been

ordained by them. (*He goes out rapidly by the door on the left.*)

FLAVIUS (*after a pause, to THUSNELDA, who remains thunderstruck, her hands covering her face.*)

Thusnelda! If your former irreconcilable resentment remains still living in your heart, from this very hour mine has vanished for ever! Whatever you may say, I will not complain! Whatever you may meditate, I will not put any obstacles to. Farewell! However hard and cruel you have been toward me, O distressed heart of a mother, I forgive you all. (*He withdraws, on the left.*)

THUSNELDA.

I knew it well! Shame is the offspring of weakness! I ought to have died! If my son betrays his blood and people—if he goes to the enemy—if he profanes and disgraces the glory of his father—mine is the fault! But, rest in peace, Armin! your name shall not be abandoned to an ignoble disgrace, and my son cannot, must not, thus close his life.

(*Whilst she withdraws, the curtain falls.*)

ACT THE FOURTH.

(Scenery the same as in the Third Act.)

(MEROWIG and RAMIS enter by the principal entrance ; THUSNELDA advances to meet them, from the side-door on the right.)

THUSNELDA.

Welcome, Merowig ! you keep your word, and come at the appointed hour ; would it please the gods that you should have come also for a fortunate hour.

MEROWIG.

I do hope so princess, for I bring you good news ; I bring you the joyful certainty of deliverance. This very next night our faithful companions will get over these walls, and conduct you away ! The guards have been bribed, horses prepared to carry us in our flight through the plain, and, once we have reached the Apennines——

THUSNELDA.

Enough ! it is too much ! Before we think of the harvest, let the seed first be secured.

MEROWIG.

You remain so placid, that I have misgivings; they make me uneasy! Is it possible that what Ramis said be true—he has resisted you; he will remain what Rome has made him—he will remain a gladiator?

RAMIS.

He keeps to the enemy! in the hands of the Romans he has grown a Roman!

THUSNELDA.

No, he is a German! in every pulsation of his heart, in every drop of his blood, he is a German it is German fidelity that attaches his heart to Rome, because there he has been trained; it is German courage which urges him to the combat; it is even German folly that leads him to prefer anything to being a German! Yes, he is a German, and it is for this that, perhaps——

THUMELICUS (*behind the scene*).

Io, Bacchus! let us clash our glasses, Lycisca!

THUSNELDA (*starting*).

His voice

MEROWIG.

Drinking songs, and sounds of drinking cups!

RAMIS.

Yes, it is so ! The son of Armin is at a festive table, singing and revelling ; he is with his mistress, and with overflowing cups.

THUSNELDA.

Let him revel ! let him sing ! let his passions overflow and exhaust him ; let them pour out ; let him gather, all at once, in foolish haste, all the flowers from the tree of life ; let exuberant youth throw out its effervescence ; the pure generous wine emerges from a foul ferment !

MEROWIG.

Yes, provided it may prove to be the vigorous sap of man, which overflows, and not a corrupt mental weakness, wallowing in filth. When no vital spring remains, there is no longer any hope.

THUSNELDA.

You feel angry with him ! you despise him ; you calumniate him ! and why do you feel thus angry with him ? Because he has resisted me—he has opposed me ? He is a gladiator, and may he not be allowed the wish to combat and to conquer ? Was it not natural that he should work himself up to a violent indignation ? Was it not manly in

him to reject indignantly a sacrifice which offended him, and for which I offered no compensation? But, when you—unravelling your mission—you show him a nation, nay, a whole nation of nations, the whole of Germany, flocking round his standard; and if I point out to him the fulfilment of high deeds, the least of which will give him immortal glory—then the bandage which covers his eyes will fall asunder, for a lofty object elevates man to greatness; then he will feel who he is, and what he is.

LYCISCA (*singing, behind the scene, accompanied by a stringed instrument*).

“Lovely kisses, and exquisite wine! now, with thy ruddy lips; then, with the red juice of the wine! lovely kisses and delicious wine, these are two blessings together!”

THUMELICUS (*behind the stage*).

“These are two blessings together!” Io, Bacchus! Io!

THUSNELDA (*aside*).

Woe to me! this singing freezes my heart! O treacherous Rome, hast thou, then, wholly paralyzed the wings of his soul! hast thou poisoned his heart, deep and deep! is it irrevocably so! but, no! whatever happens, whatever fate may

bring, my son shall not be the disgrace of Germany.

MEROWIG (*after a pause*).

Thusnelda, time is pressing, and a resolution must be taken !

THUSNELDA.

Ramis, tell my son to come to me ; and then, see that from the precincts no indiscreet eyes can watch and discover us.

(RAMIS *goes out by the side door on the left.*)

MEROWIG.

I wish you had not waited so long to speak to him of my mission, which brings me here. The combat in the circus is to take place to-morrow ; a prompt flight, alone, can save him from the danger ; and, if he hesitates to listen to our prayers——

THUSNELDA.

I hope that Heaven will be merciful to us !

MEROWIG.

You hope? that is, you fear ! We only turn to Heaven when nothing more can be hoped for from men ; and, if you had really faith in what your son will——

THUSNELDA.

I believe in the gods! and, however it may be, I

cannot consider the cause of Germany as lost. Here he is; move away a little.

THUMELICUS (*entering with RAMIS, by the side-door, on the left*).

May the plague choke you, you witch! I must come, you say? and where must I go, and to whom?

RAMIS.

Your mother, here, will answer you.

THUSNELDA (*whilst RAMIS goes out on the left*).

Come nearer, Sigmar.

THUMELICUS.

Now, what is the matter? speak, and do so briefly, I beg of you! I have some guests; or, rather, I am a guest myself; or, still better, I am enjoying a treat. But, no matter, what do you want? Speak!

THUSNELDA.

My son, look up, and behold this man!

THUMELICUS.

This one! and see what? this skin of a wild beast; his helmet with the wings of a vulture! ah, so, I understand now: (*coming nearer, and examining MEROWIG closely round.*) Truly, very handsome, very becoming, and yet, quite German.

THUSNELDA.

How, have you lost your senses? What do you take this man for?

THUMELICUS.

This man? why, I only take him for somebody whom Cæsar sends me to let me judge upon him of the costume which I am to wear to-morrow, in the circus.

THUSNELDA.

Gross, unworthy mistake! as disgraceful as the life into which Rome has plunged you! Learn, deluded young man, that it is the brother in arms of your father who stands now before you; who, to be enabled to reach this place, has enrolled himself in the German legion of Rome; he is the saviour whom Germany sends you—your saviour, your deliverer!

MEROWIG.

And, before all, it is a faithful friend, as much so as he was of your father.

THUMELICUS.

A friend! a deliverer! what are you talking about?

MEROWIG.

My prince!—for, since your father's death, it

behoves to name you thus—prince of us, Cheruscs, Germany sends me, and, through me, it calls out to you: “Rise up, think of the shame I have been subjected to with you, through you, in the race of Armin; grasp the paternal sword, son of a hero! avenge such a disgrace, avenge yourself, avenge the fatherland!”

THUSNELDA.

Do you hear, my son? they call you! whole nations dwelling between the Rhine and the Danube, between the Taunus and the Carpathian mountains, they all call on you! the whole of great Germany is clamorous for you. “Rise up! to arms!” are the words, echoing like thunder! already the swords are glittering, the bugles sounding! rise up, son of Armin, up! avenge yourself, and avenge us all, at the same time!

MEROWIG.

The princes are longing for you, as well as the people! Appear in the midst of them! one sign only from you—let them only see you, and they all rise in arms! At work, then; we take our flight this very night.

THUMELIOUS.

Does the wine work upon me? am I drunk, or are you all mad? Me fly! me call the German people to arms?

THUSNELDA.

Do you doubt all this ? You said that your vocation was to be a gladiator—that fighting was your business ; show it, then ! show what you can do ! show it against Rome, this proud Rome, this monster, corrupt and rotten, under its cuirass of gold and ivory, where you have been enthralled ! Rome, this empire ruled over by a madman—Rome, that has lost all faith in its gods, in its very self—Rome, who has thrown us both in chains—has made of you a gladiator, and now wants to murder you ! it is Rome that you must strike and crush ! you must conquer Rome !

THUMELICUS.

Ay, you might as well talk about knocking the moon down here from heaven ! who could conquer Rome ?

MEROWIG.

We have vanquished Rome—we have—in the forest of Teutoburg !

THUSNELDA.

How ! You think us too feeble. Follow us, then. Come into our forests ! Learn there to be free, and to value liberty ; come and see Justice and Right exercising there their majestic sway,

whilst mere caprice is reigning here ; you will there behold Truth, whilst here dwell illusion and falsehood ! Now you are fit to become a man amongst men. Understand, breathe, feel what we are still, and what we have been, and crush Rome, for the world is ours !

THUMELICUS.

And why should I crush Rome ? What harm has Rome done me ? What kindly benefit has Germany bestowed upon me, that for its sake I should wage war upon Rome ? What is Germany to me ?

THUSNELDA.

What ! the land for which your father bled to death, the land where your birth calls you to sovereign power : prince of the Cheruscs, do you repudiate Germany ?

MEROWIG.

Is it possible you could remain blind to the rising standard of your fatherland ? You could close your ears to the appealing voice of your mother ? You cannot—you will not——

THUMELICUS.

And why should I not ? Since Germany, my mother, as you call that country, during twenty years has not thought of me, nor of her, the wife

of Armin; why, by all the gods, should I not be allowed also to forget that unnatural mother? Once more—once for all—what is Germany to me? I am not a German—I am not a prince of the Cheruscs. I was—I am—and I will remain what I am—Thumelicus, the Gladiator of Ravenna.

THUSNELDA (*after a pause, turning to MEROWIG*).

You speak to him; I find nothing more to say!

MEROWIG.

If I were the man to forget the basis—the germ of great things, in a quarrel of words—by the hammer of Thor, I would turn away, return to my home, and leave you here to be and remain gladiator as long as you like! But, you are the son of Armin, the only one who can unite into one body the scattered Germanic power; and, therefore, I remain, and implore you not to forget your own interest in your wrath against Germany, and to do for yourself that which you would not do for us! We offer you an army which will bring down upon you power and authority—nay, the purple of the Cæsars. Do not cast away from you a chance which cannot offer itself a second time. Be our commander, and Rome will bow down before you—the world is yours!

H

THUMELICUS.

Authority and power! The purple of the Cæsars! This really deserves to be listened to, and—I will think of it! But, enough for to-day; I must go; we will speak of it again at a more favourable time—to-morrow, or——

MEROWIG.

To-morrow? but is not to-morrow the day you are to fight in the circus? and if——

THUMELICUS.

If I am killed, you mean? no, I must—I must be victorious.

MEROWIG.

Insane man! and if you are victorious, do you think that the choice will be then left to you? Do you think that Germany would accept as a commander-in-chief of its people him who, a disgraced slave, has fought with slaves—the gladiator whom the populace of Rome has crowned in the circus? No! You must make your choice this very day! Now or never! Later would be too late.

THUMELICUS (*in an explosion of rage, with a broken utterance*).

Disgrace! Because I am a gladiator! Infa-

mous! Yes, I am so, because you Germans, unconcerned, have allowed me tranquilly to become what I am! Was not Aurelian a Roman knight? Was not Valens a military tribune? And had not both been gladiators? And me, I should be disgraced—infamous for you barbarians, wild men of the forests! Now, listen to me, and ever remember what I say: I will never; never be the chief of the Germans! Never—were you to offer me the conquest of the whole world; never—if all the people of Germany were at my feet, imploring me on their knees——

THUSNELDA (*retaining MEROWIG, menacingly advancing upon him*).

Stop! Germany cannot and will never kneel before you or any man living, or who will live? Germany will never beg for a chief—it will never implore! But, your mother implores you, my son; I, your mother, who have borne you in sorrow, nursed you mournfully, and lost all in losing you. Let not the day when you have been restored to me be made more cruel than the day on which you were torn away from me! Do not deceive me, you, my dearest hope! Spare me the last, the deepest pang! Do not let me survive my only child! For, if you persist in the combat of tomorrow, if you forsake us, you are dead in the

heart of your mother ! I would rather see you cold, with the paleness of death, before me—mutilated and torn asunder—than victorious and disgraced at the same time, with your German head crowned with the laurel of the gladiator ! (*After a pause, she approaches THUMELICUS, whose head is turned away.*) You are in anger, my son ; you ought not to be so with me. I have lived for you—lived when death would have given me glory and liberty ; now, live for me ; return to me the sacrifice I made for you ! You have the noble features of your father ; like him, you are tall and handsome ; do not deceive us ! Be also noble and great in heart ; you are a man, not a gladiator ; and as your birth has made you ours, do belong to us ! Come ! (*taking his hand*) I was denied the happiness of guiding your feeble steps when a child ; let me guide the man ! Come, Sigmar, come !——

THUMELICUS (*in a passion, throwing off his mother's hand*).

No ! no !—and thrice—no !——

THUSNELDA (*drawing back, trembling, after a pause, her hand on her heart*).

Then, go !

THUMELICUS.

And I will do so! Only, don't call me back!
and don't hope to get anything from me. What I
have said, believe me, remains said.

(He hastens out by a side door, on the left.)

MEROWIG *(after a pause, turning to THUSNELDA)*.

Thusnelda!—

THUSNELDA.

Go also! Go!

MEROWIG.

Not without you! He will have his fate; such
as it is, let him have it; the clang of his chains
sounds to him like music; but you, whose soul
yearns for freedom, follow me to our fatherland
to join your people.

THUSNELDA.

Don't think of me! All I want is my grave!
But my son—I must save him! This evening, bring
here your companions, let him be carried away in
their muscular arms; let him be freed by force—

MEROWIG.

When did mere force ever free any one? Who-
ever aspires after liberty must have the will to be
free; but a slave remains a slave, wherever he may
be.

THUSNELDA.

Do you abandon the son of Armin ?

MEROWIG.

Not the son of Armin, but the gladiator of Ravenna ! To take him with me to our people would be bringing poison instead of salvation ; instead of being a bond of unity, he would be a sharp blade, that splits and divides all ! But you, let me accompany you to our land ; show yourself to those who are still wavering——

THUSNELDA.

No ! Do your duty, and I will do mine. I remain ; but you return to Germany, and, when there, tell them that while they were deliberating in councils, whilst they were consulting and doubting, a noble spirit and a free soul have perished here under the pressure and wretchedness of servitude. Tell them that they came to a resolution too late, and warn them lest this “ too late, too late,” may be again in future times the curse of Germany. Not a word more ! Go, I command you !

MEROWIG.

I obey ! (*He withdraws on the left.*)

THUSNELDA (*after a pause*).

He is gone ! I do not hear his steps any longer ;

and now all, all is over! To-morrow he fights in the circus, and he falls, dies with eternal shame on himself!—sullyng the glory of his father and of his country! And I could behold this tranquilly! Ought I let him fall before having attempted everything and tried the worse? What can I do? Turn imploringly to Flavius? No, no! Nothing but evil can come from a traitor. O eternal gods! help me and save me! Darkness covers my path! Thick vapours obstruct my sight! I know not what to do, what to think! One idea alone gleams and burns in the deepest core of my soul: my son shall not be the disgrace of Germany!

LYCISCA (*singing behind the scene*).

“Lovely kisses and exquisite wine! Now with thy ruddy lips, then with the red juice of the vine! Lovely kisses and delicious wine! These are two blessings together!”

THUMELICUS (*behind the stage*).

These are two blessings together! Io, Bacchus! Io!——

THUSNELDA.

O ye eternal gods! Yes, this will be it! You make your will known to me by this singing. Love detains him, love must save him! I must gain her over to me. Woe to me! Should I do

so—me—Thusnelda! I hesitate! O my pride! O proud soul, you rebel; you who could scarcely humble yourself before the gods! You resist! You will not! Learn to bend and yield! The head of your son is at stake! Learn to beg, learn to implore, and do not blush for having struggled before coming to this!

LYCISCA (*entering by the side door on the left, and terminating a conversation*).

Enough for to-day—more to-morrow! No, no! You must not follow me. Remain—I shut you up!

THUSNELDA (*coming in her way*).

Stop and allow me to speak with you.

LYCISCA (*advancing*).

Is it you? Only think; and it is to me you want to speak!

THUSNELDA.

To speak with you? Nay, I want to pray, to implore you, as I have never done!

LYCISCA.

To implore me? You, the German princess—me?—

THUSNELDA.

If my pride hath wounded you, you see that the gods avenge you! Let my example be a warning

to you. Be kind and gentle towards me, and listen with compassion to a mother in despair, who cries out to you, "Save my son!"

LYCISCA.

Me save your son? Do I hear right?

THUSNELDA.

The combat of the circus is at hand, and to-morrow would be too late! He must not tread upon the sand of the circus—not go near! He will not resist your tears; he will listen to you, obey you, if you implore him to fly this very night! A noble, glorious destiny awaits him in his fatherland. He repels the glorious happiness that offers itself to him; induce him to seize it; bring your influence to bear upon him, for he loves you, he loves you.

LYCISCA.

You say that a glorious destiny awaits him? .

THUSNELDA.

Fly with us, and come to share that destiny with him. You are a slave here, whilst there you will reign as a sovereign! Your happiness—his life—are at stake! If you love him, save him! Save him!

LYCISCA (*deeply agitated, in a low voice to herself*).

Can it be possible ? Could there be a path for me to rise above this abyss of deep wretchedness ? I could be honoured ! I could reign as a princess ! I could cast away from me my former existence—forget my shame ! Forget ? Could the world, and could I myself, forget what has been ? Could what has been public become buried in oblivion ? No, it is impossible ; let us think no more of it.

THUSNELDA.

You are in doubt. Do not doubt ! I turn to you as I do to the gods ! Give me your consent by a smile ! Speak ! Yes ! You must say Yes !

LYCISCA.

You harrow me ! How can I tell you that which it is very cruel for me to say, even with the sweetest words ? Only know that I cannot say "Yes ;" it is "No" that I must say ! Your hope is a dream ! What you ask of me is impossible ! Neither for myself nor for your son is there any happiness and deliverance possible.

THUSNELDA.

No happiness, no deliverance possible in flight, when everything is ready for it ! When faithful friends have prepared all to take us to our country !

No, I do not dream, but it is you whose courage is failing! Nothing is impossible to the woman who loves, to the man who has an earnest will.

LYCISCA.

And there dwells your illusion! I am not a woman; I am a flower girl. We feel no love, and we are not loved! And he! He is not a man; he is a gladiator; the whip has brought him up; he can obey; but, to have a will—a will—he cannot, he will not! However great and glorious may be the destiny to which his country invites him, he can never have the clear insight, the rapid glance, which select at once the right path; nor can he possess the mind which flashes out, nor the steady, persevering courage which does not abandon its task before it is completed! And me! but, enough words! Know only that whoever falls as we have done, can only sink deeper!

THUSNELDA.

Well, if shame oppresses you, avenge yourself; if your life has loathsome blemishes, wash them away in Roman blood. Here are weapons—armies—ready at a sign from you! Come, follow us; deliver my son, and Rome will be made to repay you; she will be retaliated upon for all you have suffered.

LYCISCA.

Could vengeance give me that which is not in me? And yourselves, barbarians, would you despise me less than the Romans? No! If ever Fortune calls me to power, it will be here at Rome, not in your forests; and if infamy is my lot, at least Rome offers me the bitter draught in a golden cup.

THUSNELDA.

And he, my son! Who will save my son? Oh! you alone on earth, you have the power. See my anguish! Let the prayers of a mother touch you, or must I? Yes, I must! (*She kneels down.*) You see me imploring at your feet. Have pity on me! Let not the last offspring of a noble race perish in the circus like a wild beast.

LYCISCA.

Rise! Do not kneel before me! That is not becoming to you, and it does not move me! Have no fear of my betraying you; I will be silent on all you have intrusted to me! I say more! Deliver him if you can; take him away to your country; but do not expect any help from me! If destiny grasps at you with a cruel hand, and draws you down, as it may be, in the miserable filth in which we, as well as others, are born, I will not do anything for, nor, on the other hand, anything

against you. Misery also takes pleasure in fellow-sufferers ; and, if I must sink to the death, so much the better, if you sink with me. (*She goes out by the farther end, on the left.*)

THUSNELDA.

Lost !—all lost—irrevocably lost ! Adieu to all succour—to all advice ! Oh ! ferocious Rome, thou gainest a complete victory, and we succumb ! The soul that does not grow benumbed in thy chains becomes decomposed and poisoned under thy yoke ! Thou turnest into sanguinary executors all those who are worthless slaves ; thus, all are kept down—safely subdued ! Woe to me, miserable, accursed woman, having conceived and borne the disgrace of Germany ! Oh ! that I should bring forth to the world the shame of my country ! Why cannot the wheel of time be turned back, year by year, day by day, till that hour when, in presence of Germanicus, my arm, ready to strike, was already raised, because I felt that two lives lived within me ! Oh ! if that hour could but be restored to me !

RAMIS (*holding an oak crown in her hand, with a mantle of purple on her arm, enters from the left*).

A messenger from Cæsar has come into the

tower and asked — Thusnelda, do you hear me?

THUSNELDA.

What is it?

RAMIS.

A messenger from Cæsar has come for you, and has ordered me to bring you this crown of oak and this purple mantle! Cæsar desires that you should appear to-morrow at the combat of gladiators, adorned with them!

THUSNELDA.

Are these his commands?

RAMIS.

The messenger has expressly recommended that you should not forget the crown of oak, for Cæsar desires that the whole circus, to-morrow, should recognise in you the personification of Germany, and, for that purpose, the oak-leaves are indispensable.

THUSNELDA.

I am to represent Germany!

RAMIS.

Yes; he has said so!

THUSNELDA.

Oh ! if I could in reality be Germany. With the whole mighty courage of Germany in my soul—with all the wrath of my country flashing in my eyes—with its gigantic power in my arms, thou wouldst tremble then, cowardly Rome ! Thou wouldst shake to the very foundation of the earth which bears you ! But listen ! Who addresses me—who speaks to me ? Or, is it a voice that murmurs within me—“Rise up, take up the German crown and do what Germany would do, in order to preserve its leaves in their noble purity ! You were wishing for the wheel of time to turn back ; well, we give you back the day, the hour you were calling for, and, make a better use of it than the first time !” (*After a pause, extending suddenly her hand for the crown.*) I will be Germany ! Give me the crown (*shrinking back*). No ! Away ! There is some blood in those leaves ! Away !

RAMIS.

It is the reflection of the purple, Thusnelda ! What is it ? Recover yourself !

THUSNELDA.

Be calm, my heart ! Collect thy force, O exhausted soul ! What was it that I promised to the gods if ever they extended to my hands

a great mission, a hallowed destiny? "I will accomplish it!" Yes, those were my words. "I will accomplish it, and, if it cannot be done, I, Thusnelda, will break down, like the oak uprooted by the tempest; I will not yield and bow down again—no, never more." Such was my vow! (*Taking the crown and placing it on her head.*) Come, then, crown of Germany—leaves of my fatherland! Come, and murmur, and rustle round my head, during my slumber, like a forest of Teutoburg.

RAMIS.

What do you mean? Thusnelda! What! you could——

THUSNELDA.

I will keep my sacred promise!

(*She withdraws with RAMIS; the curtain falls.*)

ACT THE FIFTH.

(*Scenery, the same as in the Fourth Act.*)

On the right, in the foreground, a couch, turned towards the farther end of the stage, so that whoever lies upon it, turns his back to the spectators ; at the foot of this couch a green cloth, and a pole fastened down, to which, under the direction of GLABRIO, some slaves affix a trophy of arms, namely, a helmet with the wings of a vulture, a shield embossed, a bear's skin, a sword of middle size, &c. &c.

GLABRIO.

Now, just fix the helmet on the shield, the sword under, here ; very well ! and now we are all ready. Go and see that the place remains very quiet, that the least noise may not be heard in the house and disturb the repose of the gladiators ; they have great need of rest. You may go ; you know what must be done, and attend to it. (*Whilst the slaves withdraw, and, examining the trophy.*) Really, these arms are very handsome ; somewhat

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heavy and difficult to handle, but, very singular, exactly such as heedless youth likes them. I think they will please him much. Time is flying; the hour of the combat in the circus is very near; where can my young man be? (*perceiving LYCISCA entering by the side door on the left*) Oh! here you are, my little rose! how are you?—how do we get on?—what has he done, tell me, since I left him?

LYCISCA.

He has taken a bath, and breakfasted.

GLABRIO.

And now?

LYCISCA.

He is anointing and arranging his hair.

GLABRIO.

But how does he look—I mean, in his eyes, his manner, and appearance?—does he seem well disposed?

LYCISCA.

He is as nimble and merry as if he were going to a dance, instead of a bloody game!

GLABRIO.

What a fine youth! in truth, it almost gives me pain——

LYCISCA.

That he should be ordered to fight Diodor? is it, then, decided?

GLABRIO.

Still more; this same Diodor has received orders not to spare him!

LYCISCA.

Then his death is certain.

GLABRIO.

His death? who can know that?

LYCISCA.

Yourself! You—you know it.

GLABRIO.

Now, my child, no nonsense; don't worry yourself.

LYCISCA.

Me worry myself! Poor me! it seems to me I ought to envy him!

GLABRIO.

How envy him, silly girl?—but you seem pale: you are ill, you are hot with fever.

LYCISCA.

The fact is, I don't know what is the matter with me! it thus often happens to me to pass

I 2°

from a wild, high spirit, in one night, to a deep gloom ; and to delight, one day, in the very thing that disgusted me the day before. They are mere caprices ; it is all fancy !

GLABRIO.

Yes, my child, it is so ; it is caused by a somewhat heavy blood, and a heated liver. I will send for the Jew, Simon ; he will cure you. But, here comes my lad ; and now, away with you ; he must not see you now ; you are sick, you might throw a cloud over his spirits. Go, my child—go the market, and see after your flowers.

LYCISCA.

Yes, you are right, I will go and see after my flowers ; of what use is it to swim when there is no shore in sight ? No ! better plunge deep at once, and lose all sensibility in the tumultuous whirl, and annihilate conscience ! (*She withdraws through the farther end of the stage.*)

GLABRIO.

What ails the girl ? Could her heart be really taken up with this lad ? Poh ! she has no heart ; but, then, what is it ? Poh ! what can it be, if not heedless youthfulness, that laughs at nothing ? gets sad and grave at nothing ! Before the day is over, she will be just as she was before.

THUMELICUS (*in a short tunic, his arms bare to the shoulders, with the sword of Armin at his side, enters by the left side door*).

Here I am, Glabrio !

GLABRIO.

It is just time ; the combat will soon begin, and you, my boy, must take a little rest and refresh your limbs ; you know the saying : “ Let the gladiator rest before the struggle ; his blows fall thrice harder.”

THUMELICUS.

Yes, indeed, I know it.

GLABRIO.

Well, then, do it ; it is too warm in your room, I have had, therefore, a couch prepared for you here, in the shade ; and when you lie down, if the dazzling sun annoys you, only draw that curtain.

THUMELICUS.

Thank you, good Glabrio.

GLABRIO.

And only see, here is the trophy of arms prepared ! what do you think of it, eh ?—the bear’s skin, the helmet with the wings of a hawk—how they shine and glitter ! You will, indeed, look like the very god of war,

THUMELICUS.

German arms ! now, insolent fellows, who laughed at me ; O ye wolves, now defend yourselves against the claws of the bear.

GLABRIO.

Well done, give it them well ; give them a blow for every word !—well done, my boy ; but, till then, make yourself comfortable ; loosen your girdle ; and why do you drag along this enormous iron thing ? surely you don't mean to make use of it in the circus ?

THUMELICUS.

My mother thought——

GLABRIO.

Let your mother think her own way ; the blade is too short, it won't do. (*He takes the sword away from his girdle, and lays it on the couch.*) Get rid of it ; and now think of taking some rest. I will come and awake you, and arm you, as soon as they arrive.

THUMELICUS.

When they arrive ? and who is to come ?

GLABRIO.

Who is to come ? no less a person than Cæsar himself !—Yes, Cæsar, who is to come in a solemn

procession, with great pomp and music, to fetch you both in person, yourself and mother, and accompany you to the circus.

THUMELICUS.

How ! Cæsar himself ?

GLABRIO.

Himself, I tell you ; and no gladiator yet, my son, has obtained such a favour before you ; and now, show yourself worthy of it, in the circus.

THUMELICUS.

I will ; be sure of it.

GLABRIO.

I have never been sparing with you, either with the whip or in encouragement ; now, you must do me credit. Do you hear ? be cool and calm ! confidence in victory is half the victory ; watch the eye of your foe ; guess what he will do before he aims a blow at you——

THUMELICUS.

I know, I know !——

GLABRIO.

One word more.

THUMELICUS.

And what ?

GLABRIO.

In the case that—understand me well, it will not happen, it will not, it cannot; still, in the case you might happen to feel yourself struck—I mean severely wounded—mind you fall on the left knee—the left knee—you understand? and then (*imitating the attitude he prescribes*), and then bringing forward the right leg, and at the same time leaning on your left arm, throwing back your head, you wait for the last stroke in a proud and graceful attitude.

THUMELICUS.

You may depend upon it; I know all this. I remember it.

GLABRIO.

Well, then, good bye for the present. I must go on the other side to see after the others. Lie down quietly and rest yourself.

THUMELICUS (*to GLABRIO moving away*).

If you see Keyx, who, you know, is to be my opponent——

GLABRIO (*without stopping*).

Oh! you have heard so?

THUMELICUS.

If you see him, tell the scoundrel that he must do his best, for it will be his last chance to-day.

GLABRIO (*already at the farther end, and drawing the curtain which closes the principal entrance*).

Well, well; I will see to it. Now, lie down. I will call you when it is time. (*He disappears behind the folds of the curtain.*)

THUMELICUS.

A little rest, and why not? It will do no harm. I will make up for the sleep I could not get last night; the fighting thoughts and fever would not let me close my eyes. How dull was my life till yesterday! The school of arms—lashes of the whip—here and there a praise—a meal of mutton at midday, and it was all. All days were alike; they dragged along one after the other. And now, I have lived in a few hours! The lies of Keyx, the jokes of my companions, the combat in the circus where I am going to appear, this message from Germany, and now Cæsar, who will accompany us himself to the circus. My head is turning! and that is, no doubt, the reason why I have shown myself so rude to my mother! But I wanted to take some rest; the day is warm, and nothing makes one so sleepy as thinking. (*He perceives THUSNELDA, who, during the last words, has entered by a side door on the left; she is dressed in white, with a purple mantle, the crown of oak in her hair; he rises and meets her.*) Oh! is

it you ? I did not hear you coming ; it seems to me that your presence here brings me happiness, for, as the song says, "Pleasure steals near unheard, and happiness floats light and fleeting."

THUSNELDA.

Yes ! happiness is fleeting and evanescent.

THUMELICUS.

How handsome you are thus ! How becoming that crown is to you ! and how splendid that purple ! You have done right to adorn yourself thus, for Cæsar will accompany us himself, in great solemnity, to the circus. We must not make him ashamed of us.

THUSNELDA.

Nor must we be ashamed of ourselves.

THUMELICUS.

See ; here are my arms ; I will put them on by and bye.

THUSNELDA.

Don't speak of the future as if it were present. The future belongs to the gods.

THUMELICUS.

Listen to me. Glabrio says that I must take some rest ; but first I wish we had some explanations together. You are angry with me, I see,

at my behaviour of yesterday. You are angry because our paths turn different ways; because I am resolved to remain what I am once become! Don't be angry with me!. Your wish and your opinion may be the best, the path you point out the best also; but this does not enable me to follow it. Can I be that which I am not? If I were a man capable of great thoughts and plans, undoubtedly I would feel also a taste for them; but it is not so! My wish is to be a gladiator, the first among those of my time. I will show myself worthy of you as a gladiator. And, moreover, can man, despite all his efforts, be more perfect than belongs to his inherent nature? Forgive me, therefore, not what I said yesterday, but the manner in which I said it. My taste inclines towards that which it is my destiny to obey; you must not hate me for that.

THUSNELDA.

Hate you! This heart may pine away in bitter solitude, it may feel doubt and despair, it may nourish thoughts of murder, but to hate you, my child! O eternal gods, ye know if I hate him——

THUMELICUS.

Well, then, let me find my happiness in my own way. Whatever is must be, and the gods will have it so!

THUSNELDA (*wringing her hands*).

Is it not possible to defer? Can you not renounce? You will come to this deadly struggle to-day? You insist upon it?—

THUMELICUS.

How many times must I repeat the same thing! To-day I must fight.

THUSNELDA.

The future belongs to the gods; follow your path.

THUMELICUS.

Accept, then, that which cannot be changed; and do not be angry with me! Give me your hand, and let us part with no bad feelings.

THUSNELDA.

To part; no! We are going on the same path! and I give you my hand not as a farewell, but as a token of companionship; I give you the maternal kiss of protection; I press you on my heart; and, if ever tears could be a blessing, you are the blessed among all men! Why, ye gods, have I lost him, and when lost, why do I find him again such as he is? Enough! away! (*She turns away.*)

THUMELICUS (*to himself*).

No, I do not understand her; and will never understand her. But time is going on, I must

rest ; I feel the want of it. (*He lies on the couch.*)
Oh, see here, this again ! take care of that sword
for me.

THUSNELDA.

The sword of Armin ? You give it to me—
yourself !

THUMELICUS.

You must keep it for me, for Glabrio assures
me it will not do for the combat in the circus.

THUSNELDA.

For your kind of combat, certainly, it is good
for nothing.

THUMELICUS (*laying the sword near the couch*).

I place it here, mind you take care of it ; and
now, now, I have nothing more to say (*his head
bending down*). Come to me, sleep !

THUSNELDA (*turning*).

Yes ; sleep ! sleep !

THUMELICUS.

How ! you are going away ? No, remain ; you
don't disturb me ; and if you knew a song, you
should sing it to me. How delightful it would
be ; you would sing me to sleep !

THUSNELDA.

I do not know any song.

THUMELICUS (*slumbering, and with a heavy utterance*).

Then you have forgotten them; you knew some formerly. It is as if some lead were lying on my eyelids—Lycisca, what is the name of the song we were singing yesterday? “Lovely kisses, exquisite wine; these are two blessings together.” (*He falls asleep.*)

THUSNELDA (*who had moved away, comes nearer after a pause*).

Now, the moment is come; and what is to be done must be done now. He sleeps! how sweetly, how calmly! How oft, when a rosy child, has he slept in this very place on my knees. I used to rock him; to cover him when the evening breeze came too harshly through the hall! When the flies annoyed him, I drove them away; and I used to awake him when bad dreams disturbed him; and now, now, I stand near him, menacing—the arm raised—the soul hardened—ready to cut off this exuberant young being from the tree of life, as if it were a withered, dried up branch! The wild beast defends its little ones; the rose tree stings the stealer of the rose; and I, a mother, think of murdering my child whilst he slumbers in tranquil confidence (*rushing on the front of the stage*). No, just gods! give me back my promise; I cannot keep it. I cannot destroy the life I have

given! I cannot murder—murder him whom I must love! (*After a pause, coming nearer THUMELICUS.*) Oh, my convulsed spirit! where art thou wandering? And what more do I yearn for, than as before, to preserve him from the frost of life; to awake him from the dark, gloomy dream of existence; to shelter him from the sufferings which swarm over every mortal, even the happiest? What do I want, but to save him from the deadly stroke, struck by the vilest hands! No, Sigmar, no; if this trembling hand (*she seizes the sword on the couch*) thrusts this steel into your heart; no, it is not hatred, but love, love, that cares not if the draught is bitter, provided it cures and saves; and now! (*Raising her arm to strike, then falling back, letting the sword fall.*) It is all in vain; no, I cannot. (*She sinks overpowered, whilst behind the stage are heard in the distance strains of triumphal music, the sound of which comes gradually nearer.*) Eternal gods! if you must have his life for the deliverance and honour of Germany, take it. Let the air he breathes be poisoned! cause the earth to shake, that these crumbling walls may bury him! Exterminate him with the flames of your thunder! Yours is the power; bring it into action as you please. But do not leave his destiny to my hands. Do not demand of a mother to shed the blood of her

child! (*Listening and rising suddenly.*) What is this? What do I hear? Do not my ears deceive me? No, it is the truth; it comes nearer and nearer. It is the music! It is Caligula! They come for him! Already the circus is overflowing with the crowd! Rome calls for her gladiator! But I will not give him up. I am a woman, weak and helpless, but I will not give him up. Come, try to pluck him away from me! (*Taking up the sword.*) If you, gods, who hear me in heaven, do not send lightnings and thunders—well, then, I will save the honour of my fatherland. Yes, Romans! sing your victory, let your triumphal march resound! The Germanic crown of oak is quivering, agitated, round my head! I am the wife of Armin! I am a German! I was so, before being a mother! You want Thumelicus, the gladiator? My son's name is Sigmar! (*She rushes on him.*) He remains mine; with this stroke I break down his chains. (*With a violent movement, she thrusts the sword into his body.*)

THUMELICUS (*uttering a shriek and trying to rise*).

Ah me!—Keyx!—My mother! (*He sinks down and dies.*)

THUSNELDA.

Oh! my child! (*She draws from his left arm his mantle over his face, her right hand hangs down, holding the sword—a pause.*)

GLABRIO (*behind the scene*).

Up, up! Thumelicus! (*Drawing the curtain of the room, which remains opened.*) They come! It is time. Awake, my boy! (*Coming nearer and taking away the helmet from the trophy of arms.*) Come up! Quick! Quick! Put on your arms! What!—he does not hear me! Come, woman, rouse him up, awake him! (*to THUSNELDA, who remains motionless.*) How! Are you both deaf? Must I awake the lad myself? (*Advancing to the right side of the couch, and seizing THUMELICUS.*) Up, my good fellow. What!—Is it possible? (*Letting the helmet fall.*) Blood! (*Rushing out by the entrance.*) Help!—help, here! (*He returns, bends down over the body, whilst guards, gladiators, and slaves hasten on the stage.*)

APER.

What does all this mean?

GNIPHO.

You call us?

KEYX.

What has happened? Speak!

GLABRIO (*busy with the corpse*).

No use! Not a breath of life remains. It is all over!—all over!

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FLAVIUS ARMINIUS (*coming up hastily, and soon followed by CASSIUS and several senators and knights*).

Who calls for help here ? .

CASSIUS (*while the music behind the scene ceases suddenly*).

What is it ?

GLABRIO.

See yourself. There he lies—dead !—my handsomest gladiator.

FLAVIUS.

Sigmar ! the son of Armin !

GLABRIO.

Murdered ! basely murdered !

CASSIUS.

But who—who is the murderer ?

MARCIUS (*entering by the farther end with GALLUS, and preceding CALIGULA*).

Room ! make room for Cæsar !

CALIGULA (*gaily dressed—a crown of roses in his hair, holding CESONIA by the hand, followed by PISO, VALERIUS, and others—advancing with a rapid step*).

Has Rome grown fit to become a madhouse ?
What are all these people staring about ? Why

do they stop the procession? Why does not the music go on? Speak! What is the matter here? Who is that young man yonder? Answer me, or by my wrath --

GLABRIO.

Majesty, this young man weltering in his own blood is Thumelicus, my best gladiator.

CESONIA.

What!—Thumelicus!

CALIGULA.

The son of Armin?—the precious palatable spice of my feast? Scoundrel! is it thus that you protect my gladiators?

GLABRIO.

I am innocent, Majesty. It is not my fault.

CALIGULA.

Whose fault is it, then? Who has killed him? Speak!

THUSNELDA (*who had remained hitherto veiled and motionless, letting her mantle fall down*).

I have killed him.

FLAVIUS.

Oh, my presentiment!

CALIGULA.

You, Thusnelda ? You have murdered your own son ?—and why so ?

THUSNELDA.

You ask me why I have murdered my child. I will tell you, since you do not know it. You wanted to triumph over Germany in the person of two poor prisoners—a woman and a gladiator ; to triumph over the race of Armin and his people, with the cowardly security of distance ; you intended me to act the part of Germany, and witness in tears the death of my son. But I have not acted that part with a shuddering horror ; I have been in reality Germany. I have not allowed my son to disgrace the feelings of his mother, nor the glory of his father, nor the honour of his country. I have myself sacrificed him, in hallowed priesthood, with my Germanic arm, to the deities of his youthful destiny. It was my duty to save the honour of my people. I am but a woman, feeble, enslaved ; and it is for that reason, Cæsar, that I have killed him.

CALIGULA (*in the meanwhile FLAVIUS, who has listened in deep agitation, leaves the stage hurriedly*).

It was, then, to set me at defiance. You ! dust, mere breath of air, nothingness ! You dare to

spoil my feast. Tremble, then, for I must have my game in the circus, and you must be the chief performer, since your son is gone.

THUSNELDA.

Those who fear you may tremble. My fear hath died away with him who lies there. It is you who must tremble—you whom a woman hath conquered. Tremble, lest the vapour of this noble blood flies across the Alps, and awakes the men who have vanquished Varus. Or, if your pride saves you from the fear of men, tremble before the gods; for here, with my hand on the head of my son, I implore them—I implore all the blessed, who dwell in the realm of Light—I implore the gods of darkness—I adjure them all, to behold what I suffer; and how the caprice of a dastard brutal tyrant has obliged a mother to murder her own child! And I demand vengeance for this dear blood! I implore a vengeance and retribution of hundreds of thousands of years on yourself and on Rome, so that your posterity and descendants, through ages and ages, may curse both yourself and this hour!

CALIGULA (*frantically*).

Mad woman! You call on the gods; they don't hear you.

THUSNELDA.

They do hear me! Distant voices come to my

ear; and phantoms, images, emerge from the clouds and from the Future. It is like the roaring of the waves—it is a sea, menacing and thundering. Myriads of people rush down; it is a deluge of men. Walls crumble down! battlements crash! The lurid redness of conflagration tinges the heavens. Floods of blood stain every stream. They come to inflict punishments—they come as avengers! Rome, the proud sanguinary Rome, falls in ruin! Millions of German voices call out “Victory!” and I see the earth, the ocean, subdued by Germanic swords, and subjected to the ascendancy of Germanic genius. Yes! Gods of my fatherland, we are victorious!—we are victorious! Our oppressors are crawling in the dust at our feet—they are our slaves, grinding their teeth—they implore us in vain—in vain they rise to arms.

CALIGULA (*in a paroxysm of fury*).

Take her away! Seize this mad woman! Why do you hesitate? Why are you pale? She is a liar! She is a liar! She lies!

THUSNELDA.

I speak the truth! My words are true, as true as they are the last I utter—(*Striking herself with the sword.*)—As true as this sword is piercing my heart; as true as I am now breathing my last (re-

clining and bending from weakness) ; as true as thy chains—Rome—are now dashed to atoms, and my free soul takes its unfettered flight towards its home. (*She falls near the couch and dies. The emotion and terror are general. Pause.*)

CALIGULA.

Is she dead also ? (*To CESONIA.*) See if her eye, now dead, is still menacing ! It is just as the old man used to look. Away, let the corpses be covered ! (*Slaves cover the bodies.*) Vanquished by a woman ! no, never ! No ; in spite of all I must have my game at the circus ! Where is the manager of the feast ? Where is the ædile who has been so careless about these ? Where is Flavius Arminius ? Since they escape me, I will have the uncle and brother-in-law thrown to my Hyrcanian lions. Come, let me have Flavius Arminius.

CASSIUS.

Make haste. Seek him !

CORNELIUS (*coming in*).

Stop, it is useless.

CALIGULA.

Useless ? why so ? Why useless ?

CORNELIUS.

Because, either through terror or remorse, he

has thrown himself upon his sword, and is dead. He said that life was intolerable to him since he saw his nephew killed by the hand of his mother Thusnelda.

CALIGULA.

Dead! Dead! This one is dead also! And you allowed it—you did not stop him, cowardly wretches! Oh, if the Roman people had but one single head, I know well what I would do with it! (*Frantic with rage.*) I must have a feast—I must have my game of blood in the circus!—I must see some blood!—I must hear some death rattles! Have not some Jews been taken up, of a sect which they call Christian? Let them be given to my hounds and lions! Now, let the procession be formed! Let us have some music—some music! Why is the music silent at the festivals of Cæsar? (*The music is resumed.*) Now, let us go to the circus, and you all celebrate and hail my triumph, for I am a conqueror!—I will be conqueror! Call out, “Long live Cæsar! Long live Germanicus!”

ALL PRESENT.

“Long live Cæsar! Long live Germanicus!”

(*While CÆSAR withdraws with CESONIA, and the others press on after them to the sound of merry music, CASSIUS takes the hand of CORNELIUS, and brings him in the front of the stage.*)

CASSIUS (*with warmth*).

You see it is high time ! He or we must go !
Who could live secure in the cavern of a tiger ?
Have you sifted the Prætorians ?

CORNELIUS.

They are for us.

CASSIUS.

And so is the Senate.

CORNELIUS.

When, then, do you think ?

CASSIUS (*holding out his hand*).

To-morrow !

CORNELIUS (*taking hold of his hand*).

Well, then, to-morrow.

(*While they join the others, the curtain falls.*)

FINIS.

